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jazzwise

"The music has to be soulful"

ALINA BZHEZHINSKA

From Coltrane and Ashby to HipHarp Heroine

"We've been going back to Duke and Jelly Roll"

Donald Fagen

The Jazz Smuggler

Julia Hülsmann

New Chapter, New Colours

Andrew McCormack

The Power of Three

Michael Wollny Trio

Go Gothic and Ghostly

"They're rocking out!"

Makaya McCraven

Bigs Up 'Birds of Fire'

PLUS: • Leonard Cohen on Blue Note • Olivia Murphy • Brian Auger • Oded Tzur • Nils Landgren • Tommy Crane Takes Five

jazzwise OCTOBER 2022 ISSUE 278

ALINA BZHEZHINSKA FROM COLTRANE AND ASHBY TO HIPHARP HEROINE

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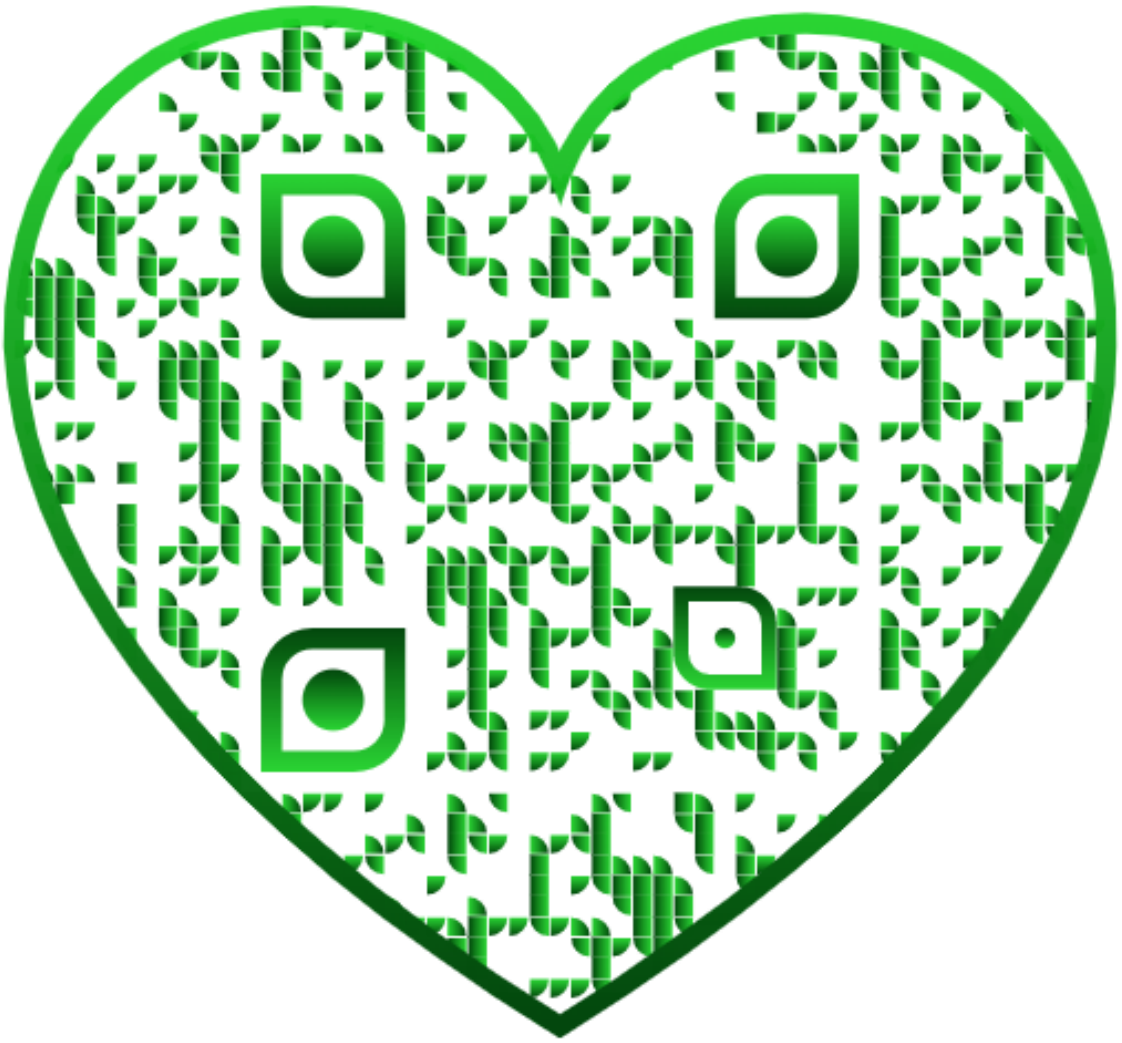

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Photo by Sulyiman

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Photo: Tatiana Gorilovsky

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News

By Mike Flynn, Kevin Whitlock and Jon Newey

For the latest breaking news visit **www.jazzwise.com**

Extra Dianne Reeves show – plus Harold López-Nussa added to EFG London Jazz Fest

Further additions have been announced for this year's 30th birthday edition of the EFG London Jazz Festival which runs from 11 to 20 November at concert halls, clubs and free stages across the capital. Having postponed her shows last year due to the pandemic, Dianne Reeves (top) has now added a second concert due to huge demand for tickets. With her date at Cadogan Hall on 12 November virtually sold out, the Grammy Award-winning singer will now also perform at the Queen Elizabeth Hall at the Southbank Centre on Sunday 13 November. There's also a newly announced show at QEH from Havana-based pianist and composer Harold López-Nussa (bottom), who dazzled the crowd at Love Supreme Jazz Festival in the summer and will bring his vibrant mix of Afro-Cuban music and modern jazz to the festival on Friday 18 November. The festival's line-up beyond jazz now includes a welcome performance from Nonesuch-signed singer-songwriter Gabriel Kahane who performs his expansive, sophisticated brand of Americana as heard on this new album *Magnificent Bird* with a show at the Purcell Room, SBC on 20 November. These concerts join those already announced in *Jazzwise* that include Abdullah Ibrahim, Melody Gardot, Jan Garbarek Group, Makaya McCraven, Fatoumata Diawara, Ron Carter, Emma-Jean Thackray, Henry Threadgill and Anthony Braxton at Chicago X London weekender; Bill Laurance (solo), Xhosa Cole IBEJI live feat. Hamid Drake; AZIZA; Guy Barker's Guitar and Clarinet Concerto with Southbank Sinfonia and Chucho Valdés' 80th Birthday celebration. *Jazzwise* is festival media partner.
Full line-up and tickets at www.efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk

PizzaExpress Live packs in festival 50

PizzaExpress Live will present 50 shows in 10 days at its three London venues in Soho, Holborn and at the Pheasantry in Chelsea as part of this year's EFG London Jazz Festival. Highlights include gigs from US vocal legends Take 6, who perform at Holborn (16-17 Nov); the 93-year-old vocalist Shelia Jordan with the Ray Gallon Trio on the festival's opening night (11 Nov), plus a rare UK show from the 84-year old jazz star, pianist Steve Kuhn, who is known for his work with the likes of John Coltrane and Stan Getz (18 Nov).

There are also appearances from Spanish singer/trumpeter Andrea Motis (pictured below), virtuosic US pianist Connie Han and her Trio, and top jazz bassist Linda May Han Oh.

Plenty of Brit Jazz names also appear with the barnstorming Simon Spillett Big Band saluting Tubby Hayes (lunchtime, Soho, 13 Nov) as well as shows from Dave O'Higgins with Rob Luft (15 Nov); leading bassists Daniel Casimir (17 Nov) and Matt Ridley (19 Nov) while gifted trumpeter Alexandra Ridout leads her Trio (20 Nov).
The Heads Up series threads rising stars through the programme with free entry lunchtime shows from French bassist/vocalist Amy Gadiaga; electronica-jazz from drummer/producer Chiminyo; the sax-led Allexa Nava Quartet; and Chinese-Welsh drummer Andee Liu. **Full dates and details at www.pizzaexpresslive.com/live-playlist**

Mark Kavuma goes big for Banger Factory Records launch

Trumpeter and bandleader Mark Kavuma will present artists from his burgeoning imprint, Banger Factory Records, at Milton Court, Barbican on 18 November as part of this year's EFG London Jazz Festival. Bursting onto UK the scene in 2021, the label has quickly established itself with its savvy mix of British jazz veterans and next generation young lions. The bill will include Zaitz and Kavuma – featuring guitarist Artie Zaitz and trumpeter Kavuma swapping their main axes for Hammond and piano respectively, joined by drummer Will Cleasby for the opening set.

This is followed by The Banger Factory band that showcases intergenerational talent with revered saxophonist Mussinghi Brian Edwards lining up with the likes of Theo Erskine, David Mrakpor and Deschanel Gordon, plus an impressive guest-list of tuba star Theon Cross, saxophonist Ruben Fox, trumpeter Trevor Edwards, trombonist Ritchie Seivwright, all on music from Kavuma's recent album *Arashi no Ato*. The evening signs off with the percussion fuelled Kinetika Bloco who whip up carnival sounds from Brazil, New Orleans, Africa and the Caribbean with an all-star line-up and guests including Kokoroko trumpeter Sheila Maurice Grey.
For more info visit www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2022/event/mark-kavuma-and-the-banger-factory

Jazz FM Awards Nominees announced

The nominations for this year's Jazz FM Awards have been announced and cover a wide range of genres and aspects of the current UK and international jazz scene. The winners will be revealed at an awards ceremony on 20 October, at a London venue (to be announced), with many guest presenters for each category and live performances by some of the nominated artists, while the recipients of the Gold Award, Impact Award and Lifetime Achievement Award will be announced in the coming weeks. The nominations are as follows: **Breakthrough Act of The Year:** Chelsea Carmichael, Jasmin Myra, Mica Millar. **International Jazz Act of The Year:** Lady Blackbird, Theo Croker, Trombone Shorty. **Soul Act of The Year**: Alex Isley, Cleo Sol, Mica Millar. **Blues Act of The Year:** Christone 'Kingfish' Ingram, Joanne Taylor Shaw, Mavis Staples and Levon Helm. **Vocalist Of the Year:** Brigitte Beraha, Georgia Cécile, Omar. **Instrumentalist of The Year:** Emma Rawicz, Fergus McCredie, Mark Kavuma. **The Digital Award:** jazzed, Summer of Soul, We Out Here. **Innovation Award:** Blue Lab Beats, Café OTO, Jazz Is Dead. The **Public Vote** categories and nominations are for **UK Jazz Act of The Year:** Blue Lab Beats, Kokoroko, Georgia Cécile; and **Album Of The Year:** Cleo Sol – *Mother*, Blue Lab Beats – *Motherland Journey*, Emma-Jean Thackray – *Yellow*, Fergus McCreadie – *Forest Floor*, Kurt Elling – *SuperBlue* and Robert Glasper – *Black Radio III*. **For more info visit www.jazzfmawards.com**

Emma Rawicz

Georgia Cécile

Kokoroko

Theo Croker

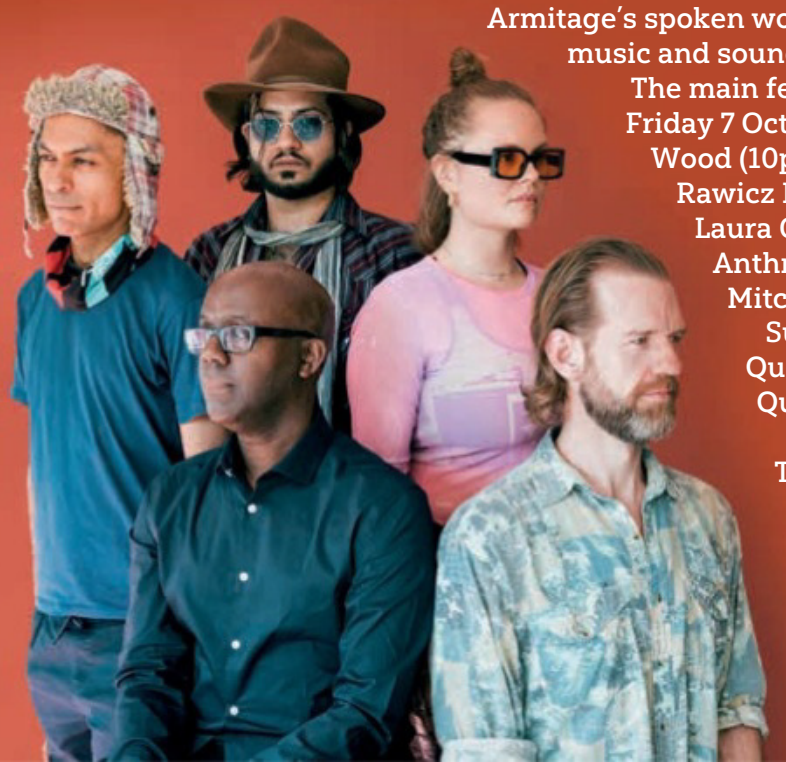
Marsden Jazz Festival to mark its 30th year against the odds

Showing true grit and determination the 30th Marsden Jazz Festival will take place from 6 to 9 October despite losing its key funder for the first time since 2008, following Arts Council England's decision in June not to support the festival due to "pressure on ACE resources".

Established in 1992, Marsden is one of the longest-running jazz festivals in the UK and owes much of its longevity to diverse programming and supportive audiences: from the jazz curious and festival-loving families, to the community cohort and core jazz fans.

The Yorkshire-based jazz festival has galvanised to bring four days of high calibre live jazz to the picturesque Pennine village and will present a self-funded programme taking over the impressive St Bartholomew's Church (aka 'The Cathedral of the Colne Valley') for the entire festival. Highlights include award-winning young saxophonist Emma Rawicz, virtuoso pianist Robert Mitchell and his True Think band (pictured below) and some high-octane Indo-jazz from clarinettist Arun Ghosh.

The event kicks off in style with a special fundraising concert from British Poet Laureat Simon Armitage CBE on Thursday 6 October (National Poetry Day), with his band LYR (Land Yacht Regatta) who comprise of musician Richard Walters and multi-instrumentalist Patrick Pearson who set Armitage's spoken word texts to genre-splicing music and soundscapes.



The main festival line-up runs as follows: Friday 7 Oct: Gary Crosby Trio (8pm), Ruby Wood (10pm). Saturday 8 Oct: Emma Rawicz Band (2pm); 'Pursuance' - Laura Cole and Walt Shaw (4pm); Anthropology Band (6pm); Robert Mitchell's True Think (8pm); Sunday 9 Oct: Samantha Binotti Quintet (3pm); Ben Crosland Quintet - Solway Stories (5pm) and Arun Ghosh – The Canticle of the Sun (8pm) **For full details and tickets visit www.marsdenjazzfestival.com/whats-on**

Editor's Note

The open nature of jazz has frequently inspired innovation – not least in the instruments it's played on. A couple of examples spring to mind: the incredible lyricism the late Toots Thielemans brought to the humble harmonica is not just technically brilliant – but frequently poignant too. Likewise, dazzling New York banjoist Béla Fleck's extraordinary improvisations defied the assumed limitations of his four-strings. Thus, the harp, as played by this month's cover star Alina Bzhezhinska, is enjoying a new golden age in jazz – with an international presence thanks to the likes of Brandee Younger (US) and Edmar Castañeda (Colombia) among many other virtuosos. Alina's skill to bring together formidable classical technique (I've heard her play Rachmaninoff transcriptions on the instrument), subtle electronica-infused loops and full-throttle jazz improv speaks not just of her personal vision, but also of the openness and innovation that's present across the UK jazz scene. Her passionate support of her fellow Ukrainians during the ongoing horrors of an unjust war also speaks of her bravery and commitment beyond music. **Mike Flynn, Editor, Jazzwise**

Photo: Roger Thomas

Brotherhood of Breath return for London dates and workshops

The music and influence of Brotherhood of Breath remains a vital undercurrent in UK jazz, from its birth in late-1960s London with leading South African musicians who escaped apartheid, such as Chris McGregor, Dudu Pukwana and Louis Moholo; to more recent incarnations with like-minded musicians replacing those who have passed. The most recent line-up was reintroduced in 2018 by saxophonists Julian Nicholas and Frank Williams, with Claude Deppa, Dave DeFries, Jason Yarde, Annie Whitehead and Chris McGregor's son, Kei McGregor among others and they return this autumn for two major daytime shows at the CLF Art Lounge, Peckham, SE15 on 8 October and 17 December. During this period they will be holding fortnightly daytime workshops and small band sets aimed at 12-17 year old young musicians (The Disciples of Breath) and more developed players aged 18 and up (Ambassadors of Breath). These take place at the CFC Art Lounge on 15, 22 Oct; 5,19 Nov and 3, 19 Dec. **For tickets and workshop participation details visit www.brotherhoodofbreath.co.uk or email julian@brotherhoodofbreath.co.uk**

Laura Jurd jumps back in Friendly manner

Mercury nominated trumpeter/composer Laura Jurd returns this autumn with a vibrant new recording project and tour under the moniker, *The Big Friendly Album*, which she releases on her own label on 21 September. Jurd draws on her Scottish/Celtic roots to craft a record in the spirit of community and togetherness, as she explained: "I am at a point in my life where I want to invite more people into my world, and I've felt compelled to make a record with a high feel-good factor - hence *The Big Friendly Album*." Early listens to the music confirm its upbeat yet sophisticated sound is reminiscent of Loose Tubes, with humorous Django Bates-ian twists, while the alt-rock edge to some of the tunes is, in part, thanks to the presence of bass guitarist Ruth Goller. The album also features Martin Lee Thomson (euphonium), Danielle Price (tuba), Alex Haines (guitar), and Corrie Dick (drums), while guests include flautist Finn Peters, Norwegian accordionist Frode Haltli, violinist Dylan Bates, saxophonist Mark Lockheart and violinist Mandhira de Saram. Dates are: Band On The Wall, Manchester (27 Sept); Sage, Gateshead (28 Sept); Yellow Arch, Sheffield (29 Sept); Stapleford Granary, Cambridge (30 Sept); Turner Sims, Southampton (1 Oct); Kings Place, Hall 2, London (2 Oct); RWCMD, Cardiff (7 Oct); Little Missenden Festival, Chesham Oct); and Symphony Hall, Birmingham (9

For more info visit www.laurajurd.com/home

Jean Toussaint salutes his Sisters, Brothers and Others on UK tour

Renowned saxophonist Jean Toussaint is set to tour his new project *Songs for my Sisters, Brothers and Others* this autumn, ahead of a planned studio recording in early 2023. Toussaint explained the background to the new music: "The idea behind the project is to pay homage to my siblings, other family members, respected friends, and mentors etc. People who had a positive impact on my life and have helped make me who I am as an artist. During the lockdown I missed my family and friends greatly. With a lot of time at hand, I started thinking of them by focussing on their personalities and by trying to define them through music... this collection of compositions is dedicated to my siblings and other people important to my life. I'm planning to release this as *Songs for my Sisters, Brothers and Others*." The band for the album comprises UK players trumpeters Byron Wallen and Freddie Gavita, trombonist Dennis Rollins, pianist Jonathan Gee, bassists Conor Murray and Mutale Chashi, plus drummers Shane Forbes, Troy Miller and Mark Mondesir with a host of top guest musicians from across the London scene. Toussaint tours the music with his quartet/quintet/sextet on the following dates: NCEM, York (JT5, 5 Oct); Seven Arts, Leeds (JT5, 6 Oct; Sheffield Jazz (JT5, 7 Oct); Lighthouse, Poole (JT6, 14 Oct); Bonington, Nottingham (JT5, 20 Oct); Taliesin, Swansea (JT5, 3 Nov); RWCMD, Cardiff (JT5, 4 Nov); Bristol Beacon (JT5, 5 Nov); Calstock Arts Centre (JT5 6 Nov); Hidden Rooms, Cambridge (JT4, 10 Nov); Blue Room, Lincoln (JT4 11 Nov); Truck Theatre, Hull Jazz Festival (JT4, 12 Nov); Eastside Jazz Club, Birmingham (JT4, 17 Nov); Cadogan Hall, London (JT6, 19 Nov) and The Sage, Gateshead (JT4, 26 Nov).

For more info visit www.jeantoussaint.com

Photo by Carl Hyde

Art Failure

Oregon/Elvin Jones

Together
Vanguard

If this column has taught us anything over the past 20 years, it's that Bad Art Happens To Good Albums. This 1976 pairing of acclaimed 'world jazzers' Oregon and legendary sticksman Elvin Jones is a case in point. One would have thought that such a momentous summit meeting derserved better than a cobbled-together piece of hackwork, but no. According to guitarist and Oregon co-founder Ralph Towner, Jones was unwell for a cover photography session, as he'd just been on one of his infamous benders (he was hospitalised with a suspected heart attack). So what did the record company do do? They took a picture of the four Oregoners and slapped [according to Towner] "a big smiling picture of Elvin's face on it like a sticker glued on top with these drumsticks around it. The art director was so bad. It just looked strange and like an afterthought." Actually it's even worse than that, as closer inspection reveals they aren't even drumsticks but just some random red/orange lines added to the image later. The back cover wasn't much better, with its individual band portraits. Towner and Co. look serious and are concentrating on playing their instruments, while Elvin laughs his head off and looks very out of place. Come on Vanguard Art Dept – get it together!

Kevin Whitlock

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Tommy Crane TAKES 5

The US drummer selects the five albums he can't live without

1 *Laughing Stock* by Talk Talk

"My favorite album (if I had to pick one) is from the enigmatic English trio Talk Talk, a band that evolved from 1980s synth-pop to ambient minimalist downtempo Krautrock. In 2005, I heard the track 'Ascension Day', the second track on the album, while shuffling through a friend's collection of music. The confluence of styles and the fact that it sounded both incredibly modern and timeless was a revelation for me. I wasn't sure if I was listening to an album from the 1970s or a newish Radiohead B-side. I'm always discovering new sounds and textures every time I listen to this masterful work."

2 *Tago Mago* by Can

"A Krautrock classic blending deep grooves, swirling textures, and generative improvisation all orbiting around the incredible beats by drumming pioneer Jaki Liebezieit. My dear friend and brilliant musician Colin Killalea turned me on to Can at the New School; his band at the time covered one of their tunes. I think the way he put it was that the drummer sounded like he had studied jazz and ended up in a psych-rock band in the 1970s."

3 *Forgotten Hill* by Chihei Hatakeyama

"Ambient backdrops that feel strikingly visual can be listened to intently or as a vibe enhancer. Pure beauty. I discovered this album while going down an ambient music listening wormhole. I have a passion for ambient music and oftentimes will practice to albums such as this. *Forgotten Hill* is particularly fantastic because the time feel is very open and is the perfect backdrop to improvise beats over the top of the music."

4 *Music Has the Right to Children* by Boards of Canada

"A flawless sequence of sonic events. It's one of the great travel soundtracks for me. My close friend, pianist Aaron Parks, who I've been playing with since I moved to NYC, and I used to geek out about this album on the road. The flow of it is nearly perfect. I know that we've both turned to this particular album for inspiration, and we still do to this day!"

5 *Red and Black in Willisau* by Dewey Redman and Ed Blackwell

"I was 18 years old. It was the summer of 2001 and I had just moved to NYC from St. Louis (my hometown). My freshman roommate, now one of the great saxophone players/composers of our time, Travis Laplante, was blaring this incredible performance on the stereo in our dorm room. I was floored by Ed Blackwell's incredibly unique way of playing rhythm in such a melodic way on the drums. I love the incredibly beautiful and mysterious tone of Dewey Redman's saxophone playing as well."

Tommy Crane's album *We're All Improvisers Now* is out now on Whirlwind Recordings

Jazz re:freshed Weekly bounces to Brick Lane

Jazz re:freshed – the weekly showcase night that ran from 2003 at Mau Mau Bar, Portobello Road, London, spawned a label and fostered the current wave of young UK jazz talent – returns for the first time in three years to a new venue of 91 Living Room, Brick Lane, London.

Running every Thursday from 9pm, the series kicked off on 1 September with a performance from DoomCannon, the project fronted by London pianist, composer and producer Dominic Canning, with additional shows from the likes of Parisian bassist and singer Amy Gadiaga, Hackney-born pianist and BBC Young Jazz Musician of the Year winner Deschanel Gordon and the all-female group Colectiva. The new series is supported by PPL, the UK's music licensing company for more than 130,000 performers and recording rightsholders. The Jazz re:freshed Weekly line-up is: Insxght (15 Sept);Deschanel Gordon (22 Sept); Colectiva (pictured, 29 Sept); DC Trio (6 Oct); Alex Cosmo Blake (13 Oct) and R D E Trio (Eddie Nache) (27 Oct).
For full details visit www.jazzrefreshed.com/events/

Pine/Rahman and Makhathini turn out for Turner Sims autumn line-up

Turner Sims, the University of Southampton's renowned concert hall and creative music hub, has announced its autumn season with some notable UK and international names set to appear. These include resurgent trumpeter Laura Jurd who plays music from her new album; leading UK saxophonist Courtney Pine and pianist Zoe Rahman (right) accompanied by a string Quartet and a rare regional show from dazzling South African piano star Nduduzo Makhathini who recently signed to Blue Note Africa. Full autumn dates are: Svaneborg Kardyb and RKDIA (14 Sept), Penguin Cafe – A Matter of Life (25 Sept); Laura Jurd's Big Friendly Album (1 Oct); Chelsea Carmichael (15 Oct), Courtney Pine featuring Zoe Rahman (4 Nov); Don Vappie and Jazz Creole (8 Nov); Nduduzo Makhathini (22 Nov) and Swing Into Christmas With Down For The Count Swing Orchestra (10 Dec – two shows).
For full details visit www.turnersims.co.uk/event-category/jazz/

Photo by Alfred Bailey

70 YEARS AGO – Annie Ross

She was born when her Scottish showbiz family was playing a theatre in suburban Surrey, and was brought up from age three by her Scottish showbiz aunt in Hollywood. Her musical ear would lead to work as a studio backing singer, and later to the vocal trio Lambert-Hendricks-Ross. But before that, she lived in Paris with drummer Kenny Clarke and made her first solo records in New York aged 21.

For her second session on 9 October 1952, Annie Ross was encouraged by the Prestige label to imitate the success of King Pleasure, who had done his lyrics to a James Moody improvisation on 'I'm In The Mood For Love'. According to Ross, she took home a few Prestige instrumentals including two by tenorman Wardell Gray ('Twisted' and 'Farmer's Market') and overnight created vocalese versions of both discs, the themes and the tenor solos, recording them with a small-group including organist Ram Ramirez (composer of 'Lover Man') and Art Blakey.

The fact that 'Twisted' was later covered by performers such as Joni Mitchell and Bette Midler has tended to obscure how brilliant was Ross' original. She follows closely the articulation of Gray's tenor playing, and stays in tempo for the closing punch-line (which subsequent interpreters tend to over-emphasise). As well as satirising the very NYC fashion for psychoanalysis, her words bring to life the rhythmic inflections of Gray's solo, and her phrases "I was a genius!" and "I was swinging!" brilliantly mirror two of his most striking melodic ideas. A swinging genius indeed, and the record was enough of a hit that she subsequently deputised for Billie Holiday at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem.

Brian Priestley

MILES DAVIS

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED 1982-1985:

THE BOOTLEG SERIES VOL. 7

The next instalment in the celebrated, award-winning archival series that began in 2011, shining an in-depth light onto different eras of the legendary career of Miles Davis.

In the 1980s, popular music had moved to a smoother, electronic-based sound that traded the steam of previous years for subdued arrangements meant to elicit peace and deep reflection. Miles Davis embraced this era, pulling inspiration from FM radio and an upstart music video channel called MTV. He was searching for the next frontier, letting his creativity roam. This music on The Bootleg Series Vol. 7 captures that exploration, and finds Miles beginning to re-emerge in a creative landscape far different than the one he left in 1975. He's touched every inch of pop culture while keeping true to his iconoclastic vision of jazz as amorphous art that's supposed to bend and flow and mutate to something else.

On That's What Happened, we get to play in the rubble of what would become yet another period of unprecedented innovation. Beauty resides in evolution. The set collects nearly 4 hours of unreleased music including 2 CDs of studio material from 1982 to 1985 plus another CD containing a complete, blistering show of one of Miles' last amazing bands captured live at the Festival International De Jazz De Montreal in July 1983.

SONY MUSIC

Ella Fitzgerald and fellow guests at the Women's Press Club, London, 10 April 1964

This month we go off the beaten track and visit the Women's Press Club, in London WC2. TEXT and PHOTOGRAPH: **VAL WILMER**

Back in the day when American musicians spent two weeks touring Britain, days off could be spent in unlikely pursuits. Whenever the Modern Jazz Quartet were in town, for example, the writer Kitty Grime took vibraphonist Milt Jackson to lunch at Rules, London's last bastion of old-fashioned dining. Others played golf, browsed in bookshops or museums. And Ella Fitzgerald? Let me tell you a story.

Just a few years before the digital revolution, women journalists were still barely tolerated in Fleet Street. Being unwelcome at key institutions was problematic – we were even banned from bar service at El Vino's – but a bolt-hole existed nearby. For a quarter of a century, The Women's Press Club was that haven.

At number 52 Carey Street, in the heart of legal and literary London, the club was tucked away behind the Royal Courts of Justice in a corner building that might have been standing since the days of Dr Johnson. Inside it was modern, stylish and relaxing, created in the war-damaged hulk of an old Lyons tea shop, and planned by women with fellow professionals in· mind. It was launched on 1 April 1943 in the presence of prominent Liberal, Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, novelist Rose Macaulay, and the President of the National Union of Journalists.

I was recruited by a friend who knew several African politicians, among them Tom Mboya, Kenya's Minister of Labour. She knew Mugo Gatheru, too, the Kenyan author of *A Child of Two Worlds*, the story of his journey to the West, and when she invited him to be Guest of the Month at a Women's Press Club lunch, she asked me, too.

Warm, low-key conversation led to an interview and friendship, while at the club, other guests followed, among them Sir Edward Boyle, Minister for Education in the Macmillan government.

Then came the exciting announcement: a Canadian member was bringing her friend, the American singer Ella Fitzgerald, to lunch. Everyone was agog.

Came the day, 10 April 1964, and Ella turned up, wearing pearls and an attractive black satin top trimmed with lace. Following introductions, lunch was served, and the conversation began. In deference to my interest in jazz, I was seated opposite Ella. Members were on best behaviour, and so was she, delighted not to have to answer the usual dumb questions about other singers.

> ***"Ella was delighted not to have to answer the usual dumb questions"***

All went well until someone leaned forward to comment on a particular issue, asking Ella did she not think such-and-such an attitude was "terribly parochial"?

Young though I was, I noticed her falter at a word apparently outside her immediate vocabulary. These were the days when middle-class women still wore hats when lunching, and I still have a vision of the singer floundering in a sea of extravagant millinery.

Wildly inexperienced and floundering myself, I managed to scrape in with a remark about the Beatles, whose 'Can't Buy Me Love' she had just recorded.

Her relief was obvious. She told us she had heard the song, with its "cute" lyrics, on television's *Ready Steady Go!*, then added, with more than a little prescience, "I know I'm going to annoy somebody, but I think the Beatles are a turning point in music and have set a standard they and other groups will have to keep up, by writing their own material."

Ella talked about being discovered at the Apollo in Harlem: "We were a bunch of girls who thought we could dance and we drew strings to see who would go on. I won and went out on the stage to dance but I just couldn't make it. I looked out there and saw all those people! The guy said 'do something' and all I could think of was Connee Boswell's song 'Judy'."

Thus did Ella's show business story begin. She paid tribute to drummer/bandleader Chick Webb for his encouragement, and talked about the rigours of touring. Members were especially sympathetic when she explained how one-nighters were particularly trying for a woman, something we all agreed that few male writers could understand. And then it was over. Afterwards, I took some photographs and wrote a little piece for *Jazz News*, then drifted off into other worlds.

Doors shut for the last time at Carey Street on 24 July, 1968. Members continued to meet at the Arts Theatre Club until 31 March 1972, by which date the Women's Liberation Movement was underway, with millinery giving way to dungarees and jeans.

ABULLAH IBRAHIM

AIR ANATOLIA: A JOURNEY INTO THE FUTURE OF ANATOLIAN PSYCHEDELIA

BILL LAURANCE // CAMILLA GEORGE

CHELSEA CARMICHAEL // CHUCHO VALDES

CoN & KwAkE

DAVE HOLLAND, CHRIS POTTER, LIONEL LOUEKE, ERIC HARLAND: AZIZA

DHAFER YOUSSEF WITH BALLAKÉ SISSOKO AND EIVIND AARSET: DIGITAL AFRICA

DIANNE REEVES // DOOMCANNON

EMMA-JEAN THACKRAY // FATOUMATA DIAWARA

HIDDEN ORCHESTRA // JAN GARBAREK GROUP

JEAN TOUSSAINT // JUSTIN-LEE SCHULTZ

KAHIL EL ZABAR ETHNIC HERITAGE ENSEMBLE, DWIGHT TRIBLE AND DAVID ORNETTE CHERRY

KURT ELLING // LADY BLACKBIRD

MARK KAVUMA // MATANA ROBERTS: COIN COIN

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Sun-Mi Hong drums up for K-Music's return

Photo by Dave Stapleton

Korea-born, Amsterdam-based drummer Sun-Mi Hong is now well established in the Dutch jazz scene, with a distinct style combining grooves with explosive technique simmering beneath. Hong is the key jazz highlight of this year's edition of K-Music that returns to the capital (and some regional venues) in October and November for its ninth edition, with Hong set to appear on 17 November at the Purcell Room, Southbank Centre as part of the EFG London Jazz Festival.
The concert will feature music from the follow-up to Hong's award-winning 2021 album, *A Self-Strewn Portrait*, (2021), as she releases *Third Page: Resonance* on Edition in November, while the Purcell room show will include a collaboration with guitarist Ant Law and saxophonist Alex Hitchcock, who perform the opening set. Further K-Music dates are: Dal:um & ReMidas (Milton Court, 5 Oct); Jaram Lee: The Old Man And The Sea (Purcell Room, 9 Oct); PAKK & EERU from Jambinai 'Silent Exorcism' (Rich Mix, 13 Oct); Dongyang Gozupa (various venues from 29 Oct to 2 Nov) and Park Jiha (Stone Nest, London, 24 Nov).
For more info visit serious.org.uk/events/series/k-music-2022

NEWS IN BRIEF

PENDULUMS RING OUT FOR TOUR

The acclaimed yet quirky project Pendulums: Music for Bellringers, Improvisers and Electronics plays a series of dates at churches around the UK this September. The brainchild of lauded composer/pianist/electronics artist Andrew Woodhead, the bold new suite features an exciting band of trumpeters: Sam Wooster and Charlotte Keeffe; alto saxophonists Sam Andreae and Lee Griffiths, and baritone saxophonist Helen Papaioannou alongside the award-winning Bellringers of St Paul's Church, Birmingham. Collectively they combine peels of bells and jazz improv with live electro-acoustic pieces, remixed field recordings from churches, bells, and related found sounds. Dates are: Sacred Trinity, Salford (22 Sept); St George's, Jesmond, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne (22 Sept); St John's, Ranmoor, Sheffield (24 Sept); St Peter Mancroft, Norwich (29 Sept) and St Paul's JQ, Birmingham (30 Sept).
For more info visit www.andrewwoodheadmusic.com/pendulums

NOBLE AND EKRISEN FOR STAPLEFORD GRANARY JAZZ NIGHTS

Cambridge's music and arts venue, Stapleford Granary, is hosting a series of jazz events this autumn.

These include the Mark Crooks Quartet with Dave Newton, Jeremy Brown and Matt Home (18 Sept); the Apollo Saxophone Quartet's live score *Journey Across the Impossible: Music with Silent Film* (7 Oct); leading UK pianist Liam Noble's plugged-in trio project The Long Game, with bass guitarist Tom Herbert and drummer Sebastian Rochford (9 Oct); and a welcome appearance from top Norwegian pianist Espen Eriksen with his Trio of double bassist Lars Tormod Jenset and drummer Andreas Bye. **For full details visit www.staplefordgranary.org.uk**

JAZZ FM ANNOUNCES GUEST HEAD OF MUSIC SERIES

Mid-August saw the start of the UK's largest jazz, soul and blues radio station, Jazz FM, open up its music policy to allow a wide range of artists to take over a day's track selections as the station's Guest Head of Music. Things kicked off with 2021 Jazz FM Award winner – the multi-instrumentalist and singer Emma-Jean Thackray – as she appeared in the studio each hour, talking with Simon Phillips, Deb Grant and Jamie Crick to present some of her favourite music.

Other artists appearing as Guest Head of Music include American jazz drummer Makaya McCraven plus the up-and-coming UK soul singer Mica Miller.
For more info visit www.jazzfm.com

Obituaries

Joey DeFrancesco: 10/04/1971 – 25/08/2022

Photo by Robert Crowley

Back in 2002, the Tanglewood Music Center in the Berkshire Hills had a focus on the Hammond organ. The highlight was a concert in which the veteran Philadelphian master Jimmy McGriff went head-to-head with the then 31-year-old Joey DeFrancesco. The younger man comprehensively outplayed McGriff, but to those of us in the audience it was clear that with so much love and affection between the two instrumentalists, any rivalry was forgotten in sheer celebration of the great music that they performed. Yet McGriff had been an early influence on DeFrancesco, along with Jimmy Smith, and – something of a child prodigy – the 10-year-old Joey then played for and was mentored by Groove Holmes and Jack McDuff, meaning that even before he won third place in the Thelonious Monk Competition at 16, and was signed by Columbia, he was moving confidently among the greatest jazz organists on the planet.

Born in Springfield, Pennsylvania, Joey grew up in a musical household, trying his hand at many instruments, along with his father and brother, (although all of them were proficient organists, as can be heard on 1992's album *Reboppin'*). While attending the Philadelphia High School for Creative Arts, Joey was spending his evenings playing in a band that from time to time included Hank Mobley and Philly Joe Jones. He was not to be phased by moving among such great talents, and, still in his teens, toured Europe with Miles Davis and appeared on 'Cobra' from Miles' *Amandla* album. He would shortly afterwards tour and record with John McLaughlin. But as the 1990s began he firmly established himself as a bandleader in his own right, and in addition to his regular small group, his five Columbia albums included some stellar guests, ranging from Illinois Jacquet to John Scofield.

The roll-call of musicians with whom Joey later worked was remarkable, ranging alphabetically from Eric Alexander via Kenny Garrett to fellow organist Dr Lonnie Smith. The band of his own that made the biggest impression on me, when I heard them live at the Iridium in Manhattan, was his trio with guitarist Randy Johnson and drummer Billy Hart, paying tribute to Jimmy Smith with music from their 1998 album, *The Champ*. Joey had such an affinity for the Hammond B3 that in that setting he seemed to find endless resources within it, yet never losing his focus on Smith's effortless swing and phrasing. Latterly although he returned often to the classic organ-guitar-drums trio (Larry Coryell and Jimmy Cobb being a particularly brilliant example) he branched out and played other instruments (including trumpet) on his concerts and recordings. His 2021 album *More Music* is his most proficient in this vein, the basic organ trio with guitarist Lucas Brown and drummer Michael Ode being supplemented by piano, keyboards, vocals, trumpet and tenor saxophone, all played by Joey. Yet it is as a supreme organist he will be best remembered, able, like his Philadelphian mentors, to lift the roofs off small club and vast concert halls alike with his unparalleled groove, swing, and invention. **Alyn Shipton**

Jaimie Branch 17/06/1983 – 22/08/2022

The hugely talented trumpeter-composer Jaimie Branch died unexpectedly in late August at just 39 years old. She was best-known for her Fly or Die project (three albums, plus scores of concerts around the world) with percussionist Chad Taylor, bassist Jason Ajemian and cellists Tomeka Reid and Lester St Louis, and her various collaborations and guest appearances. She was also a key figure on the Chicago-based International Anthem Records.

A charismatic, driven and occasionally confrontational live performer, Jaimie was also an improviser of brilliance who, despite her avant-garde leanings, also possessed a populist touch; as well as having an uncanny feeling for 'the groove', she knew how to make her music accessible, and how to integrate non-jazz elements into it, and won a large, committed following here in the UK, in the US and Europe. I was lucky enough to see her in London a number of times, and her gigs were always dynamite.

Originally from Huntington, New York, she started playing trumpet when she was nine. After a troubled childhood and adolescence, she attended the New England Conservatory Of Music and lived in Chicago until 2012 when she moved to Baltimore for a Master's degree in Jazz performance at Towson University. In 2015, Jaimie moved to New York, where she worked with cellist Fred Lonberg-Holm and drummer Mike Pride, among others.

An endlessly curious musician, she cited Don Cherry, Booker Little, Miles Davis, Axel Dörner and saxophonist Evan Parker among her key influences. She married her eclectic musical approach with a fierce political engagement, excoriating the US political establishment (Donald Trump especially) at shows and on record. And despite a reputation for spikiness, she always seemed to find time after gigs to chat to fans about music and politics, and to sign LPs and CDs for them.

Over the course of her career, Branch performed solo and collaboratively, appearing on albums with Never Enough Hope, Local H, Atlas Moth, and Chicago guitarist Eli Winter's just-released self-titled, album. She was also well known for her work in the duo Anteloper, which she performed in with drummer Jason Nazary. Their latest album is reviewed – along with the Winter disc and Dave Gisler Trio's *See You Out There* (on which she made one of her final studio appearances) on page 35 this issue.

Kevin Whitlock

Creed Taylor: 13/5/1929 - 23/8/2022

The innovative producer Creed Taylor made a huge impact on the album market in the 1960s and 70s. A keen trumpeter while studying for a psychology degree, he joined the fledgling Bethlehem label and succeeded with singer Chris Connor and the first 12-inch LP by JJ Johnson and Kai Winding. Moving to ABC-Paramount's new record division, he garnered critical acclaim for the first album by the 23-year-old Quincy Jones and the first Lambert-Hendricks-Ross LP.

For many listeners, his greatest achievement at ABC was creating the Impulse! label, with its gatefold sleeves and striking artwork. There, he borrowed Ray Charles from the company's pop roster, produced Oliver Nelson's *Blues and The Abstract Truth* and Gil Evans's *Out Of The Cool*, and signed John Coltrane for the unique *Africa/Brass* album. There were no immediate follow-ups, though, as Taylor took over the Verve label, recently sold to MGM by Norman Granz. Ditching numerous Granz stalwarts, he hit the jackpot with Stan Getz's *Jazz Samba*. A year later came the even more successful *Getz/Gilberto*, and new signings led to Bill Evans' *Conversations With Myself*, and the first big-band albums of both Jimmy Smith and Wes Montgomery, arranged by Nelson.

A common trend of Taylor's productions became the commercial arrangements and the frequent choice of pop songs and TV and movie theme tunes, as was his regular use of Rudy Van Gelder's up-front rhythm-section sound. Taylor then set up his CTI series, first in partnership with Herb Alpert's A&M and then from 1970 as an independent label. Retaining collaborators like arranger Don Sebesky, he made middle-of-the-road stars of Freddie Hubbard, Stanley Turrentine and George Benson, and created the more soul-oriented sub-label Kudu featuring Esther Phillips and Grover Washington.

Taylor also retrieved former stars such as Paul Desmond, Chet Baker and Milt Jackson, all backed by electric keyboards and frequent sweetening devices. But a distribution deal through Motown eventually led to Taylor declaring bankruptcy, although a late success was Nina Simone's 1978 album *Baltimore*. His absolute control of production techniques, with or without the lead artists' agreement, has long become standard, while reissues through Sony and sampling by pop acts have cemented Taylor's reputation. **Brian Priestley**

Respected discographer and writer **Bob Weir** dies age 82

Photo by John Watson

The Cardiff-based jazz discographer and columnist Bob Weir died on 8 July, aged 82. A well-known figure at jazz festivals around Europe, including Brecon, Vienne, Perugia, Belgrade etc, Weir filed festival reviews and compiled a jazz information column for *Jazz Journal* for many years.

His abiding legacy to the jazz world lays in his published discographies, these offered in loose-leaf book form by Names and Numbers, the Dutch specialist publisher and as supplements to the biographies of such key figures as Buck Clayton and Sammy Price

Having travelled with Bob in New York and New Orleans, I can attest to his knowledge and enthusiasm and also having provided data that he incorporated in his superb Teddy Edwards discography, I can confirm his meticulous attention to detail, his hand-written sheets (Bob eschewed the computer for many years) circulated widely for comment and correction. In addition to Edwards, there were definitive discographies devoted to Clifford Brown, Lucky Thompson, Helen Merrill, Leo Wright and Frankie Newton. An ardent jazz collector, Weir was the former secretary of the Welsh Jazz Society. His professional career was spent in local government in Birmingham, Leicester, or Lincolnshire, and briefly in West Africa where he oversaw an election count. Our condolences to his wife Christeen and to their family. **Peter Vacher**

A Blue Hallelujah

As Blue Note Records releases the multi-artist tribute *Here It Is: A Tribute to Leonard Cohen*, **Stuart Nicholson** examines the jazz side of the legendary singer-songwriter's legacy

The animated debate that once swirled around Canadian singer and songwriter Leonard Cohen has continued unabated since his death in 2016 at the age of 82. His ardent fans believe that he was the best interpreter of his own work, arguing his singing about lived personal experiences has an authenticity other singers lack. Others point to memorable versions of his songs by other singers, arguing that the very best could reveal subtle nuances and hidden meanings in his poetic lyrics.

This debate began in earnest in 1969, following Roberta Flack's version of 'Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye,' from Cohen's 1967 album *Songs of Leonard Cohen*. It re-contextualises his lyrics from a feminine perspective and is by any measure the superior vocal. And then there's John Cale's version of 'Hallelujah,' one of Cohen's most-loved songs, routinely described as "one of the greatest songs ever written" by the popular press. The Velvet Underground man had the nerve to edit down Cohen's 15 verses to a leaner, more succinct, version in 1992, that, it is argued, played a huge role in moving the song towards the legendary status it now enjoys in the Cohen *oeuvre*.

And while there are countless examples of other artists rejuvenating or reinventing Cohen's work – from Tori Amos' version of 'Famous Blue Raincoat' to Nick Cave's version of 'I'm Your Man' – what is often overlooked is that Cohen's audience was actually broadened through cover versions of his songs; he probably would have remained a niche gloom-monger, catering for a small but hip following in Greenwich Village had it not been for Judy Collins' cover version of Cohen's 'Suzanne,' which became a big hit and put Cohen on the musical map. Subsequently, other cover versions of his songs in later years that did well helped resurrect his career more than once.

So the debate – whether a cover version can be superior to the original – is back on the agenda with Blue Note's bold *Here It is: A Tribute to Leonard Cohen*, out on 14 October. Produced by Larry Klein, whose legend proceeds him in pop music, while in jazz, his production of *River: The Joni Letters*, by Herbie Hancock earned the pianist a Grammy in 2007 for cover versions of singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell's work, that coincidentally also featured Leonard Cohen on Mitchell's 'The Jungle Line.'

While there were just six guests on *River: The Joni Letters*, including Mitchell herself, Klein goes for broke on the Cohen tribute by calling on 10 vocalists, including Norah Jones (she was also on *River*), Peter Gabriel, Gregory Porter, Sarah McLaughlin, Luciana Souza (she too was on *River*), James Taylor, Iggy Pop, Mavis Staples, David Gray and Nathaniel Rateliff, while guitarist Bill Frisell steps out of the shadows of the backing band to feature on 'Bird on The Wire.'

"Leonard Cohen had been a friend since 1982 or so," says Klein. "During the last 15 years of his life he become a close friend. He was possibly the wisest and funniest friend that I had, someone I enjoyed, immensely, in every way. After he passed away, I frequently found myself covering his songs with other artists I was working with. One reason, of course, is that the songs are so good – in a certain way. Leonard is the best pop songwriter ever – but the other reason was that it helped keep him in the air around me."

Klein invited an ensemble of what he calls "prescient and forward-looking jazz musicians" to back the various singers, comprising guitarist Frisell; saxophonist Immanuel Wilkins; pianist Kevin Hays; bassist Scott Colley; and Nate Smith on drums. This group is augmented from time to time by Greg Leisz, Frisell's bandmate in the Charles Lloyd group The Marvels, on pedal steel guitar, and Larry Goldings on organ.

Klein assumed a wide ranging brief in selecting Cohen's songs: from the 1967 album *Songs of Leonard Cohen* came 'Suzanne,' through to the title track of his final album *You Want It Darker*, released in 2016.

Klein's choices indluded some of Cohen's best-known songs, tunes that are now regarded as classics, such as 'Hallelujah,' 'Bird on a Wire,' the enigmatic 'Famous Blue Raincoat,' and the brilliant Norah Jones-ification of 'Steer Your Way,' through to the semi-devotional 'You Want It Darker,' engagingly growled by Iggy Pop.

The result of Klein's deep dive places songs that have already stood the test of time and seem destined to last into the infinite, together with covers of lesser-known songs. As James Taylor explains: "I was drawn to a relatively obscure piece that was new to me, 'Coming Back To You.' Like so much of Leonard Cohen's writing, this lyric resonates deeply with his forlorn and hopeless take on the bleak side of love and attachment. So breathe a deep sigh, and drink up..."

Ultimately, Cohen's lyrics also stand as works of poetry, which is why they lend themselves to endless reinterpretations, as Luciana Souza reflects: "I once read that the purpose of poetry is to deepen the humanness in us. Leonard Cohen's poems certainly do that.

"With Larry's incredible landscape of artists and musicians we are invited to a quiet and powerful reconnection with our humanity, something much needed these days."

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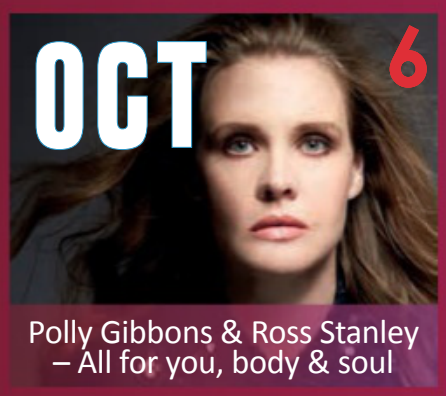

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Claire Martin, Nikki Iles
& Dave Green

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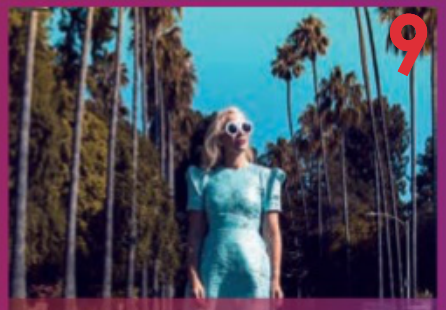

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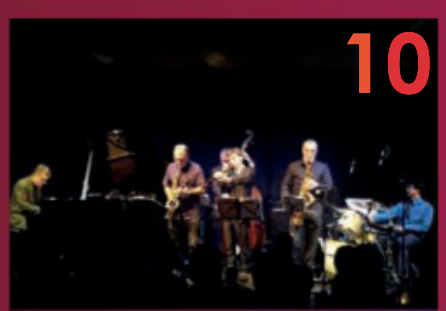

Miles in the 50's
Chris Ingham's Rebop

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Jazz Hooks

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Charting the Jazz Message/October 2022

Makaya McCraven

The *Jazzwise* Chart

1 Makaya McCraven In These Times *XL/International Anthem*
2 Marius Neset Happy *ACT*
3 Julia Hülsmann The Next Door *ECM*
4 The Bad Plus The Bad Plus *Edition*
5 According to the Sound In–Tension *Losen*
6 Anteloper Pink Dolphins *International Anthem*
7 Joshua Redman Quartet LongGone *Nonesuch*
8 Samara Joy Linger Awhile *Verve*
9 Andrew McCormack Trio Terra Firma *Ubuntu Music*
10 Gareth Williams Short Stories *Miles Music*

AUDIOPHILE CHART
High-end hits from Kevin Whitlock's hi-fi

1 Duke Ellington Live At The Berlin Jazz Festival 1969-1973 *The Lost Recordings LP*
2 Donald Byrd Black Byrd *Dutton Vocalion SACD*
3 Blue Mitchell Blue Mitchell *New Land LP*
4 Lou Donaldson Mr Shing-A-Ling *Blue Note Tone Poet LP*
5 Ella Fitzgerald/Louis Armstrong Ella & Louis *Analogue Productions/Verve LP*
6 Jan Gunnar Hoff Home *2L SACD*
7 Avishai Cohen Shifting Sands *Naïve LP*
8 Wayne Shorter Speak No Evil *Blue Note Classic LP*
9 Oliver Nelson The Blues and the Abstract Truth *Analogue Productions/Impulse! LP*
10 Abbey Lincoln Straight Ahead *Candid LP*

EUROPEAN JAZZ MEDIA
Selected by Europe's leading jazz media

1 Steve Gadd & WDR Big Band Center Stage *Leopard*
2 Mizookstra Also Sprach Mizookstra *Sangue Disken*
3 Soft Machine Facelift France & Holland *Cuneiform*
4 Julien Tassin Primitiv *Ramble*
5 Anteloper Pink Dolphins *International Anthem*
6 Rich Ruth I Survived It's Over *Third Man Records*
7 Dorůžka Wyleżoł Ballard Andromeda's Mystery *Bivak*
8 Karja/Renard/Wandinger The Wrong Needle *Kirke Karja*
9 Andrzej Jagodziński Requiem *Polskie Radio Katowice*
10 Camilla George Ibio-Ibio *Ever Records*

J-TO-Z
Fresh jazz sounds on BBC Radio 3, every Saturday at 5pm

1 Jeff Parker Forfolks *International Anthem*
2 Balimaya Project When The Dust Settles *Jazz re:freshed*
3 Nat Birchall Unity Ensemble Spiritual Progressions *Ancient Archive of Sound*
4 Jimetta Rose and Voices of Creation How Good It is *Daydreamer*
5 Kokoroko Could We Be More *Brownswood Recordings*
6 Connie Han Secrets of Inanna *Mack Avenue Records*
7 Various Artists Blue Note Re:Imagined II *Blue Note*
8 Theon Cross Intra-I *New Soil*
9 Anteloper Pink Dolphins *International Anthem*
10 Harish Raghavan In Tense *Whirlwind Recordings*

JAZZ FM CHART
Essential sounds from Jazz FM on DAB and online www.jazzfm.com

1 Jamison Ross JAMO *Affective Music*
2 Camilla George Ibio-Ibio *Ever Records*
3 Chip Wickham Cloud 10 *Gondwana*
4 Samara Joy Linger Awhile *Verve*
5 Various Blue Note Re:Imagined II *Blue Note*
6 Tony Hightower Legacy *Hightower Legacy Records*
7 Charles Lloyd Trios: Ocean *Blue Note*
8 Terri Lyne Carrington New Standards Vol.1 *Candid*
9 Snarky Puppy Empire Central *GroundUP Music*
10 Takuya Kuroda Midnight Crisp *First Word*

GUEST CHART :: JULIA HÜLSMANN
Jazz gems from Julia's home stereo

1 Becca Stevens Attaca Quartet *GroundUP Music*
2 Moritz von Oswald Dissent *Modern Recordings*
3 Brad Mehldau Jacob's Ladder *Nonesuch*
4 Jon Balke Siwan Hafla *ECM*
5 Aline Frazão Uma Musica Angolana *Flowfish*
6 Kit Downes/Petter Eldh/James Maddren Vermillion *ECM*
7 Koma Saxo Koma West *WeJazz*
8 Field Someone Talked *Enja*
9 Maria Schneider Data Lords *ArtistShare*
10 Marcin Wasilewski Trio En attendant *ECM*

THE BLUEPRINT CHART
Chris Philips' maraud through new jazz heat, grooves and free sounds

1 Miguel Zenón Música de Las Américas *Miel Music*
2 Dafnis Prieto featuring Luciana Souza Cantar *Dafnison Music*
3 Roxana Amed Unánime *Sony*
4 Joshua Redman Quartet LongGone *Nonesuch*
5 Say What Say What *WeJazz*
6 John Escreet Seismic Shift *Whirlwind Recordings*
7 Charles Lloyd Trios: Ocean *Blue Note*
8 Jeff Denson/Romain Pilon/Brian Blade Finding Light *Ridgeway Records*
9 Bobby Watson Back Home In Kansas City *Smoke Sessions*
10 Julia Hülsmann Quartet The Next Door *ECM*

UNION STREET
Pre-loved and new jazz gems from the Lewes vinyl lovers

1 John Coltrane Coltrane *Impulse!*
2 Sonny Clark Dial S For Sonny *Blue Note*
3 Magician Magician *Trunk*
4 Keith Jarrett Treasure Island *Impulse!*
5 Wendell Harrison Dreams Of A Love Supreme *Tidal Waves*
6 Hampton Hawes Four! *Craft*
7 James Taylor Quartet Man In The Hot Seat *Audio Network*
8 John Coltrane A Love Supreme 2022 Reissue *Impulse!*
9 Portico Quartet Portico Quartet *Real World*
10 Jimmy Guiffre Western Suite *Music On Vinyl*

SOMETHIN' ELSE CHART
With Jez Nelson, Sunday nights 10pm on Jazz FM

1 Billy Valentine/Larry Golding Trio We People Who Are Darker Than Blue *Flying Dutchman/Acid Jazz*
2 Jeff Denson/Romain Pilon/Brian Blade Finding Light *Ridgeway*
3 Matthew Halsall The Temple Within *Gondwana*
4 Tony Williams Play Or Die *M.I.G.*
5 Thumbscrew Multicoloured Midnight *Cuneiform*
6 Henry Franklin Henry Franklin *Jazz Is Dead*
7 Keith Jarrett Bordeaux Concert *ECM*
8 John Escreet Seismic Shift *Whirlwind Recordings*
9 Jaimie Branch FLY or DIE LIVE *International Anthem*
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Ace of bass: Scott LaFaro

BILL EVANS' 'AUTUMN LEAVES'

Brian Priestley homes in on the groundbreaking bass work of the late Scott LaFaro on this pivotal Bill Evans track from 1959's *Portrait In Jazz*

All the new Bill Evans releases this past decade have been from his musically mature years. But it's equally fascinating to study the period where it was still coming together for him. From that point of view, the first two albums under his own name (*New Jazz Conceptions* and *Everybody Digs Bill Evans*) show a brilliant pianist learning from colleagues, such as drummers Philly Joe Jones and Jones' admirer Paul Motian, how to best cultivate his talent in a trio setting. The impact of bassist Scott LaFaro's arrival, as discussed when I wrote about his 1961 Village Vanguard swansong with Bill (*Jazzwise* 264), was felt immediately in the album *Portrait In Jazz* from that ground-breaking year 1959, and nowhere more than in the version of 'Autumn Leaves'.

The melody has an unusual history: first written by Joseph Kosma for a French ballet in 1945, then used for background and a throwaway song in the 1946 movie *Les Portes de la Nuit*, it only became a French hit in 1950 ('Les feuilles mortes'). But the following year, Edith Piaf recorded Johnny Mercer's English lyrics, and it gradually infiltrated the jazz repertoire. The first (not very) jazz version was done by then-Paris-resident James Moody (1951), followed by people like Stan Getz, Tal Farlow, Erroll Garner and Ahmad Jamal, whose 1955 trio arrangement inspired the famous 1958 recording by Cannonball Adderley with Miles Davis.

By the way, the only jazz vocal worth hearing is the 1982 Sarah Vaughan, whose improvisation is brilliant enough to stop anyone else attempting to scat ever again. And, of course, the tune went into Miles' routine for the next several years, thereby alerting Bill Evans.

Its appeal to jazzers can be summarised as providing a classic example of the so-called 'cycle of fourths'. You wonder why some American songwriter hadn't already written it but, as well as numerous subsequent European clones, it eventually influenced standards such as Artie Butler's 'Here's To Life' and Johnny Mandel's 'Theme From M*A*S*H' (which became another Evans favourite). As a final bit of background, it's important to note the original Evans album existed in two different versions; producer Orrin Keepnews later explained that Bill's preferred take of 'Autumn Leaves' failed to record in stereo and only appeared on the mono album. However, the 'second-choice' take on the stereo release, lasting 5'56" instead of 5'22", is the one that many listeners prefer.

It has a couple of surprises even in the first half-minute, such as the intro having its second four-bar phrase done in 5/4 (which Evans had previously used on his debut-album composition called 'Five'). Then, while he plays the opening melody (0'09"), LaFaro instantly drops the first beat of each bar to create phrases avoiding the "one", achieving considerable suspense until he finally moves into 4/4 and then an arranged ending to the theme-statement. The biggest surprise is that, straight afterwards (0'45"), the bassist then launches into an ambitious unaccompanied solo and, when Evans joins in (0'57"), he's not comping but starting a two-chorus melodic dialogue with LaFaro. Motian eventually adds a couple of fills on brushes, only switching to sticks in time for Evans's solo (2'01") to be backed by the first continuous rhythm-playing.

Not for long, though, because at the start of the next chorus (2'40") while Evans and Motian continue swinging, LaFaro briefly introduces a few bars of counter-rhythm that recur several times in the next minute or so. Meanwhile at 3'08", the pianist becomes involved in a tricky figure that almost comes unstuck at 3'20" (the fact of Evans seemingly misfingering is so unusual that it may explain why this wasn't his favourite take) but he recovers by expanding the melodic range and rhythmic variety of his phrasing. Then, after seemingly simplifying it with a view to ending his solo space, Evans is propelled by the rhythm-section (3'54") into an extra chorus, which creates a "shout-chorus" with his version of the "locked-hands" technique inherited from Garner and Jamal, whereby his right-hand timing is mirrored by simultaneous repeated chording in his left.

But that's not all the excitement, for at 4'08" the two hands suddenly play in 6/4 and then, after nearly two bars' pause, they echo the intro with a couple of bars in 5/4 (4'13") over the steady 4/4 of Motian and LaFaro. This inspired solo does finally wind down (4'31") but only into a renewed melodic dialogue with the bass. The return of the theme at 5'07" hardly stops Evans from continued improvisation, and LaFaro also revisits some of his freely-timed backing of the opening chorus, until an organised extension of the original arranged ending. A great listening experience, and not only for announcing the growing liberation of the bass in the jazz of the next decade.

Murphy's Lore

Composer-saxophonist **Olivia Murphy**'s latest album *Moonrise* is a collection of songs which ventures into a fantastical dreamworld of one night's sleep. Intrigued by the music and the premise, **Andy Robson** spoke to her to find out more

What! Did no-one tell Nikki Iles, Rosie Frater-Taylor and now Olivia Murphy, that it's a tad mad to front a jazz orchestra? Too expensive, too complex, just too much trouble. But then that talented trio aren't ones to act on received – probably male – wisdom. They blaze their own trail.

"A few people have suggested that," laughs Murphy, that you have to be a bit mad, "But there's something about standing in front of a jazz orchestra and conducting, about hearing my music, my arrangements and MD'ing it: it's like 'Why would I want to do anything else?'"

And there's nary a shred of ego in her enthusiasm. For Murphy the appeal of large ensembles is that ineffable mix of the communal and the individual discovering their own voices in collaboration.

"What's really exciting is that with jazz orchestras you spend so long putting the ink down, writing the music, but then there are whole sections, solos, an open bit, that are completely transformed by the amazing improvisations. You have these notes on the page but then you're giving it away to these amazing performers. And when you look up from conducting and they're smiling and swaying you think "Um, I must be doing something right as a leader."

But the journey to the 'podium' didn't come easy, although Murphy's love of big bands was there early.

"Ellington, always, and I've always loved Johnny Hodges' playing, especially the ballads, always the ballads, whether it's Ellington or Monk. 'Star Crossed Lover', or 'Haupe' from *Anatomy of a Murder*, I love them. Kenny Wheeler, the large and small ensembles, Maria (Schneider) of course... Miho Hazama, *Dancer in Nowhere*, I love that recording!"

But Murphy's first explorations in bigger scale music came relatively late, during her third year at the Birmingham Conservatoire, after she'd won its Jazz Composition award.

"Which was a bit of a shock but it gave me so much confidence and I started to think 'Yeah, I can do this!'"

Murphy, however, is open that she'd faced challenges with her own playing (she'd won her place to study jazz saxophone), and indeed had been told by a tutor on the NYJO Saturday school that she commuted to on Saturdays from her family home in Peterborough, that she wouldn't get into college.

"Yeah, that wasn't inspirational. I just went home and practiced harder."

Although she was rejected from London colleges she turned the NYJO tables by winning their composer's chair upon graduation from Birmingham.

"Except that was a bit tricky as that coincided with the first lockdown," she smiles.

But again Murphy turned adversity to advantage: "It wasn't the most ideal

Floating Point

Oded Tzur is no ordinary saxophonist – having learned his craft from a Hindustani flute master, he's long taken a different path from his contemporaries. With his second, ECM album *Isabela* about to make waves, **John Fordham** spoke to him about his inspirations and ambitions

"I suppose that to me, all music is really a form of collective meditation," observes Oded Tzur, the Tel Aviv-born and New York-resident saxophonist/composer. "The form of collective meditation. And to commence it one should probably whisper rather than shout."

As an insightful statement, delivered with measured care; the thought seems to mirror the unique music Tzur began crafting on a tenor saxophone from his college years in the early 2000s, and with which he has been entrancing small but fascinated audiences of fans and practitioners for the past decade. But with 2022's *Isabela*, the second ECM release by Tzur and his brilliantly intuitive quartet – pianist Nitai Hershkovits, bassist Petros Klampanis, and drummer Johnathan Blake – the slow-burn arrival of this remarkable original looks about to heat up.

Oded Tzur's work might be superficially linked to the plaintive long-tone reveries of Charles Lloyd or the spacily echoing minimalism of Jan Garbarek, but only a little probing establishes that the Israeli-American is coming from a very different place - technically, tonally, and conceptually.

His saxophone tones materialise imperceptibly, like bubbles slowly forming, and his fragile, meticulously-shaped notes seem to float in still air. Tzur creates the bewitching sonic illusion of playing an ancient bamboo tube with just a few tone-holes for variation, rather than a metal tenor saxophone bristling with springs and pads. His melodic sense often exhibits the storytelling invitations of folk-songs rather than jazz's more angular challenges, and with *Isabela* – a dedication to his wife – his fascination with India's raga form has

Photo: Justin Bettman

situation: but it was useful because I then had months to write lots of different versions of lots of different tunes."

Those tunes were those of the late Amy Winehouse. And her radical arrangements found expression in a mammoth 25 date, 10-month tour which she largely MD'd and conducted.

That would be enough for plenty of artists, but Murphy isn't like plenty of artists. In a packed 18 months, she's also written and recorded her own orchestra project, a consequence of winning the Jazz Alliance award, overseen by David Lyttle of the Belfast/London based Lyte recording label.

And again she found opportunity in challenge: "As part of the award, we were meant to play live in Belfast," explains Murphy, but Covid restrictions squished that. So Lyttle suggested she went into the studio.

The resulting EP, *Moonrise*, was recorded with her regular trio, Olly Chalk on piano and Becca Wilkins, whom she's known since college days, on vocals. In its etherial detail, *Moonrise* could hardly be more different from her large ensemble writing.

Olivia remembers "I was thinking 'Why can't I sleep right now?': normally I fall asleep as soon as my head hits the pillow."

But it was no wonder she was tossing and turning.

"I'd been doing so much orchestral stuff, arrangements for the NYJO Winehouse tour and the jazz orchestra commission from the University of Birmingham: and I was conducting all of that too."

So Murphy turned challenge into music. *Moonrise* explores that liminal world where dream and waking entwine.

"It was refreshing doing the trio stuff. And to find myself playing: I mean, I studied jazz so I could play, so it was great to have that hat on again."

And as a player she'll be in Calum Gourlay's big band for the London Jazz Festival gig at the Vortex on 11 November. But come the second set, she'll be fronting that large ensemble, which will include colleagues from Birmingham like Becca Wilkins, but also her 'new' London colleagues. There will be new tunes, and Murphy's work as leader and composer will be informed by the 10 sessions she's enjoyed with Django Bates as part of the Jazz Alliance award, a relationship that was as practical as it was inspiring.

Photo: Ellie Koepke

But Murphy's already looking beyond the Festival; she'd love a full studio recording of her orchestra before the end of next year, while she has a truly internationalist outlook. She laments the lack of UK big bands like the Danish Radio Orchestra, the NDR big band, the WDR and others, all of whom have given opportunities to the likes of Bates, Nikki Iles, Colin Towns and Mike Gibbs, none of which they'd enjoy in the UK.

"It wasn't always easy at college. At one stage I was the only woman across all four years on the course. It's hard to see what you can do when there's no role models. But now, it's not just Maria Schneider, I look to composers like Nikki Iles, to the larger ensembles across Europe and America, that I want to reach out to. There are so many women composers and leaders of big ensembles it makes me feel 'Yeah, I wanna be one of you guys!"

And who's to say she won't be?

never been so explicit on record, since the tracklist is a five-part suite underpinned by a single raga motif.

If you didn't know it already, it might not come as a surprise that Tzur's principal instrumental teacher was not a saxophonist, but India's most revered exponent of the Hindustani *bansuri* flute tradition, *Hariprasad Chaurasia*. But he makes it plain that the culture and traditions underpinning Chaurasia's music have been inseparable from that maestro's instrumental teaching as transformative influences on his life.

"Growing up in this time in history where so many types of music are at one's fingertips, forced me to think of a unifying theory of sound and melody," Tzur says, "and to ask myself whether there are any common threads to the phenomenon of music. Just defining music in local terms that apply to each place and time separately seemed incomplete to me, when music is clearly a global phenomenon."

Though as a teenage saxophone student, Tzur was (and remains) a devoted fan of jazz pioneers from Lester Young and Charlie Parker to John Coltrane, and also investigated flamenco and European classical music alongside Balkan, Brazilian and African forms, he has searched far beyond music for inspirations in his quest for a universal language. His researches have embraced Noam Chomsky's linguistics, and the 'hero's journey' writings of philosopher and comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell – but he found his answer in a musical source in the end.

"When I first heard Indian classical music I realised that it could become that vehicle for me," Tzur recalls. "Naturally, that's the fruit of a place and a time just like any other tradition, but it's an art form so meticulously methodical that to me it feels almost like a laboratory of sound. What I couldn't find in jazz or in Western classical music – the study of sound and melody beyond its local parameters of taste and aesthetic conventions – I found in Indian classical music, and in *Chaurasia*'s sound."

Tzur has called his signature technique the 'Middle Path' – a method he painstakingly developed over years, tone by tone.

"I was struck by the slides Indian instruments are capable of," he says, "and how meaningful they are to the music. In the context of Raga, the Indian melodic system, slides are not a mere ornament – they really *are* the music."

The approach allowed Tzur to add microtonal nuances to notes while barely disturbing their core pitch, which gives his phrasing both continuity and an ethereal richness that can not only mimic a *bansuri* flute sound but sometimes suggest the softness of a french horn or the vocal tone of a bassoon. *Isabela*'s mix of songlike themes (occasionally recalling those of bassist/composer Avishai Cohen), fluid ensemble improv, and the title track's beautiful opening in murmuring low saxophone tones and pianist Hershkovits' delicate replies, brings Oded Tzur's music to a new plateau of inimitable expressiveness.

"*Isabela* is the album I always hoped to make," Tzur says. "The task of painting a portrait of my wife brought out the best in me, I think, because my wife is an extraordinary person, and also because it utilised what I've worked on my whole life as a musician – Raga. Raga is, even in the original Indian context, a sort of a portrait. Stories always play a big part in my composition process, I think they allow me to speak to my audience in ways that remain indirect, but still illuminate the music. Music itself is a story, isn't it? We can never understand it, but it's always true."

Oded Tzur's *Isabela* is out now on ECM Records

Straight from the Harp

As a teenage girl in 1980s Ukraine, **Alina Bzhezhinska** loved nothing more than compiling her favourite music onto cassettes, before she discovered jazz, the sonic riches of the harp and the music of Dorothy Ashby and Alice Coltrane. For her much-anticipated second album, *Reflections*, the harpist has revived this curatorial approach and drawn together her own personal universe of sounds. **Jane Cornwell** tunes in...

Alina Bzhezhinska has always loved a mixtape. As a teenager growing up in Lviv, western Ukraine, in the 1980s, she'd make her own: a classical piece by Pierre Boulez, say; Louis Armstrong, Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, cherry-picked from her parents' vinyl collection; The Beatles. Metallica; Vangelis, soundtracking *Blade Runner*. Anything, really, that took her fancy.

"So many different sounds and influences," says Bzhezhinska, sitting in her North London living room flanked by her vintage Lyon & Healy practice pedal harp – the same 90-year-old model played by Dorothy Ashby, an all-time hero - and a Celtic harp that she bought when living in Scotland. Her black electro-acoustic pedal harp, on which she records and plays live, is downstairs by the front door, positioned for a speedy getaway.

"I'm constantly pulling together strands of music I love," she continues. "What I did as a kid on cassette I now do on platforms like Spotify. Tunes for dancing or meditating, for when I am happy or sad. Free-spirited tunes, all of them, filled with courage, innovation and beauty. When I thought about creating this new album I decided to take the same approach."

Bzhezhinska's hugely anticipated sophomore album *Reflections* draws, then, from various sources. Most notably, from Ashby and Alice Coltrane, the artists she calls "the two major pillars of jazz harp." Other legends are accounted for: John Coltrane is represented by the ever-powerful 'Alabama' and Duke Ellington by 'African Flower' ('Petite Fleur Africaine'), a dialogue between harp and sax. Mongo Santamaria's 'Afro Blue' is here, with its lyrics – gorgeously sung by London-based vocallist Vimala Rowe – by Oscar Brown Jr. So too, are a clutch of originals by Bzhezhinska, and one (the flowing, Ashby-inspired 'Sans End') by her bassist Michele Montolli.

> **"Alice Coltrane said the piano was like a sunrise and the harp was like a sunset"**

Rooted in a mixtape's anything-goes aesthetic, but given an arc, a narrative, by deft sequencing, *Reflections* is a work that progresses the artist's blend of jazz and classical harp and layered electronics, folding in the contributions of British jazz stars, including trumpeter Jay Phelps, sax supremo Tony Kofi, double bassist Julie Walkington and the core members of Bzhezhinska's HipHarpCollective, more of which in a moment. It's a recording in which, while buoyed by the collective, the harp unequivocally leads; an album that takes in trad jazz, spiritual jazz and free jazz, hip hop, trip hop and rap; which firmly positions Bzhezhinska as a jazz musician with a unique vision.

"My debut album (2018's *Inspiration*) was much more traditional, with its jazz quartet line up of bass, drums, saxophone and a harp," says Bzhezhinska (an earlier recording, 2005's *Harp Recital*, is pre-jazz, pre-memory). "I went deep into the music of the Coltranes, and included my own compositions inspired by this amazing couple. But I was still searching for my own language, for a new sound, a new territory. My goal is to make music that no one expects from the harpist."

This time around it is American jazz harpist Ashby, she of 1958's *Hip Harp*, 1968's *Afro-Harping* and 1970's *The Rubaiyat of Dorothy Ashby*, from whom Bzhezhinska takes major cues. Ashby and her fellow Detroit Cass Technical College *alma mater* Alice Coltrane, five years Dorothy's junior, are her go-tos, as they are for any jazz harpist worth their strings.

"Until you immerse yourself in the style, techniques and ideas of these two women you cannot call yourself a jazz harpist. Only then you can go in any direction you want: minimalist, electronics, traditional jazz. But we have to really know, the source."

Classically-trained under Dr Carrol McLaughlin at the

Photo: Monika S Jakubowska

University of Arizona, Bzhezhinska is an avid researcher, wont to disappear down jazz-history rabbit holes in her quest to discover as much as possible about her touchstones. About Alice Coltrane, whose improvised recordings, first heard, proved epiphanic: "I felt scared; I couldn't believe somebody could be so free. The challenge for me in jumping from classical to jazz was believing I could make fast, complex harmonic changes using pedals. To learn the rules, then break them."

The Coltranes' story is well documented: Alice was an accomplished pianist ("She said the piano was like a sunrise and the harp was like a sunset") who channelled her grief at losing her sax-titan husband John in 1967 by teaching herself to play the harp he'd bought for her (and in 1983, under her Sanskrit name Alice Coltrane Turiysanagitananda, founded the Sai Anantam Ashram in California). Who recorded some 40 – forty! - albums as a bandleader before her own death aged 69 in 2007. Her tune 'Fire', co-written with tenor player Joe Henderson, features on *Reflections*, and was recorded in one take with Kofi and Phelps in a way that respects the original while using improvised melodies and rhythmical clusters that speak to Coltrane's piano stylings and Bzhezhinska and Co's freedom of expression.

"It's important to have the right people," she says. On arriving in London in 2015 Bzhezhinska heard Kofi playing at Dalston's Brilliant Corners and recognised a kindred soul; their duo began soon after. "The music definitely has to be soulful."

Especially, perhaps, when interpreting Dorothy Ashby – a multi-instrumentalist and composer who worked the clubs of Detroit, collaborating with artists from Motown here, establishing the harp as a prominent instrument there, investing what was formerly a symbol of serenity and celestiality with be-bop energy and releasing 11 solo albums along the way. That Ashby left behind virtually no interviews or archive footage after her death aged 53 in 1986 might have consigned her to the history's dustbin had not fans – including contemporary harpists Brandee Younger, Zena Parkins and indeed, Bzhezhinska – taken it upon themselves to reverse her reputation as one of the most unjustly under-loved jazz greats of the 1950s.

"Nobody ever spoke to me about Dorothy, or Alice," says Bzhezhinska, who, taught by her mother, starting learning piano and harp aged five, going on to music school then studying at the F Chopin Academy in Warsaw, just over the Polish/Ukrainian border from Lviv. Who, after a stint living in Glasgow, came to the attention of London and the world in a starry 2017 triple bill at the Barbican featuring Denys Baptiste and Pharoah Sanders, a tribute to the music of the Coltranes.

"My classical education was very strong for 15 years. I studied Boulez, Cage, Lutoslawski, all those composers but even in the West no one seemed to know about Alice or Dorothy, these African-American women playing old instruments in a male-dominated arena, one in the shadow of her husband, the other an activist but without a school or students to follow her."

Bzhezhinska read that Ashby's father was a jazz guitarist who encouraged his daughter to play piano with the jazz musicians who visited their home, in between playing harp in Cass Tech's long respected Harp & Choir class.

"You can hear that Ashby studied the harp properly. Even on her duo albums with flutes, her harp is leading, definitely equal. Listen to Alice Coltrane with Pharoah Sanders or Joe Henderson, and while she has her own language it is very different, more open and spiritual.

"The only time you might think 'Is this Coltrane?' is on *The Rubaiyat of Dorothy Ashby*, an album inspired by the writing of Persian poet Omar Khayyám, where Ashby is singing and playing the Japanese koto (plucked half-tube zither)."

It was Ashby's *Hip Harp* that literally changed Bzhezhinska's professional identity. Fed up with having her surname mispronounced – there's a YouTube video where she phonetically breaks it down into bite-size syllables (Bshair-shn-ska) – she began billing her solo shows with harp and electronics as, simply, Alina HipHarp. "It tells you who I am, and who I'm inspired by. That what I'm doing is hip and edgy. That there's harp. It suggests hip hop; I'm a huge fan of J Dilla, whose electronic beats and drum programming influenced so many hip-hop producers as well as my new album," she adds.

> ***"I agree with Nina Simone, who said it is the role of the artist to reflect the world. Any difference you can make, however small, is something, and the world needs this now more than ever"***

L-R: Michele Montolli, Alina, Adam Teixeira and Joel Prime

HipHarpCollective was created during lockdown, with the intention of bringing the international jazz harp community together online, indirectly furthering Bzhezhinska's explorations of unusual settings and combinations, as with those early mixtapes.

When HipHarpCollective became a live concern, she knew she wanted electric bass as well as both drums and percussion ("Together they make such a strong rhythm section, which no one else has done with the harp") and beats, loops and effects.

"I was always interested in distorting the harp sound. There was something in me that was hungry, you know? I mean, I love the pure harp sound so I try and be faithful to it. But I also like the idea of going somewhere, having a little detour then coming back to the original harp sound without any amplification."

What we hear in *Reflections*, then, is a harp on its own journey, from the Ashby-penned opener 'Soul Vibrations' with string quartet-style violin and viola by multi-instrumentalist Ying Xue and a funky psychedelic arrangement by Bzhezhinska, through 'For Carrol', an elegiac piece for her late teacher that moves from heart-rending ("The trumpet melody is like a cry of desperation") to funky and free, to the much covered 'Afro Blue' - its contrasting brass parts written by Kofi, the vocals by Rowe a masterclass in range, phrasing and tempo change and every bit as good as those of Erykah Badu in the 2012 Robert Glasper version. *Reflections* is an album, too, on which the core members of the London-based HipHarpCollective are vital: aforementioned upright/electric bassist Michele Montolli, from Italy. Drummer Adam Texeira from South America via Canada. Joel Prime from Adelaide, Australia on percussion, having previously played kit

Photo: Ed Otchere

"I was searching for my own language, for a new sound, a new territory. My goal is to make music that no one expects from a harpist"

Photo: Monika S Jakubowska

Alina's HipHarp Collective at Ronnie Scott's with guests Tony Kofi and Jay Phelps

drums in Bzhezhinska's quartet.

"When we were last in Adelaide" – Bzhezhinska played the WOMADelaide festival on the back of *Inspiration* – "I visited Joel's parents in the family home; his father Don showed me this whole studio filled with percussion belonging to Joel, told me he won competitions as a child and young man and wanted him to play more. It was my last conversation with Don, who has since passed away, but when I was thinking about this new sound I thought, 'That's it. Joel is on percussion'. And he's awesome."

All the musicians in HipHarpCollective have palpable rapport, both in the core group and in the wider, more fluid line-up with its invited guests. Among them, on *Reflections*, Birmingham rapper SANITY and French/English poet Tom theythem *[sic]*, both of whom add prose to 'Paris Sur Le Toit' – telling of a goddess at a Paris roof top party that is shut down by police, who then wanders with her heavy harp on her back, ignored, seeking acceptance and love.

Which isn't so far from the truth (and for Bzhezhinska, as for Ashby and Coltrane, truth in music is everything). Bzhezhinska has previously spoken about the travails of a) being a female bandleader, carting her harp unaided from her car into venues; and b) the stereotypes that follow a female harpist (among them, "god's messenger on earth"), obscuring the diversity of an instrument that can imitate sounds of nature or, strings bent, scream and shriek, or, with pedal slides, play jazz.

Like its parallel instrumental version, 'Paris Sue Le Toit' ft. SANITY and Tom theythem is based on a real life event that saw Bzhezhinska playing with beatsman Kamaal Williams in a roof top car park in Pigalle during Paris Fashion Week, an illegal happening that was halted moments after starting.

"On the train back I thought, 'What just happened?' I was already thinking about electronics and remixes" - American hip hop/deep house producer DJ Spinna and her BBE label mate, Paris-based Sly Johnson, have remixed both 'Paris Sur Le Toit' tracks, wildly increasing Bzhezhinska's Spotify traffic - "but this crazy experience kickstarted my experiments."

And so Bzhezhinska's harp continues its sojourn on *Reflections*, making a detour back into the original harp sound on closing track 'Meditation', an improvisation that borrows from Middle Eastern melodies and features Julie Walkington on double bass. The last piece Bzhezhinska wrote for the album, the lovely, lilting title track, again featuring Walkington, comes early: "I'd created a narrative in how I'd placed the tracks, a theme that connected one to another but I needed a final piece of the puzzle.

"I was sitting right here on a late summer afternoon like this one," she says, waving an arm toward the open window and the large verdant trees outside. "There was a warm breeze, and the colours of the leaves were turning. I'd been listening to *Undercurrent* by Bill Evans and guitarist Jim Hall, which is very tranquil and spacious, with this gentle comping that I was trying to do with the harp when I started playing on this afternoon.

"Suddenly this tune came out." She pauses and smiles. "I thought, 'This is my tune'. It felt like I was looking around and reflecting on my life, on everything I'd done. My personal life had undergone some huge changes and I finally felt strong, like the world was my oyster. So this is a tribute to traditional jazz, as well as a catharsis after everything I touch on in the album, from grieving for my teacher, to being banished from the Paris roof top, from getting into the spiritual sound of Alice Coltrane to studying the life and work of Dorothy Ashby. It's all that."

But since its creation preceded the 24 February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, what it is not, is a direct response to the crisis inflicted on Bzhezhinska's homeland by what she calls "the Russian monster machine." Bzhezhinska has so far been involved in over two dozen fundraisers for Ukraine since the invasion, overseeing the purchase and delivery of goods and vehicles, driving one of the vehicles in convoy to the country. With the conflict showing no signs of abating, she is worried about compassion fatigue ("Ukraine is not front page news anymore"), and feels a responsibility to try and maintain awareness.

"I don't call myself an activist," she says. "But I agree with Nina Simone, who said it is the role of the artist to reflect the world. Any difference you can make, however small, is something, and the world needs this now more than ever. We can't just quietly mind our own business."

As Bzhezhinska prepares to tour the colourful, nuanced, oh-so-emotional work that is *Reflections*, she's hoping that the exposure it brings – for Ukraine, for multi-cultural London, for Ashby and Coltrane – will have a ripple effect. Raising awareness. Fostering appreciation. Getting us to think while we groove, swoon, or chill.

"For me the biggest compliment I can receive as a musician is when people recognise where my traditions are coming from but can also acknowledge that I haven't stopped developing. Creating my own language."

A NEW POINT OF ENTRY

German pianist-composer **Julia Hülsmann** is back, with a brand-new album on ECM called *The Next Door*. **Stuart Nicholson** believes it marks the next, elevated, stage of this talented musician's career...

When pianist Julia Hülsmann graduated from Berlin University of the Arts in 1996, very few people in Germany, let alone Europe, had heard of her. That is not the case today. Widely regarded as one of Germany's leading jazz musicians, she has earned high praise for her thoughtful, probing piano style and her poised, elegant, contemporary compositions. It is perhaps too easy, with the benefit hindsight affords us, to claim her success seemed inevitable and that she would eventually earn the recognition she now enjoys. But that's only half the story. The other half is one of dedication to her her craft, a strong work ethic and an openness to new ideas. It meant that her career path was one of steady accomplishment rather than a shooting star ride to the top of her profession, but by the time she got there she had developed the skills to maximise the opportunities that came her way, such as being invited to compose and arrange a whole programme of compositions for the internationally famous NDR Big Band, or demanding tours of the United States, Central and Southern America.

Julia Hülsmann's musical odyssey began in earnest when she formed her own trio in 1997. Subsequently, the threesome regularly toured Germany, Europe and then the world, including Canada, Peru, Central Asia and China. By the time her trio made their debut on the ECM label in 2008, they were already one of the most popular groups on the German jazz scene, with Julia attracting high praise for her melodic, inventive music. Five more ECM albums and 11 years later, her longstanding trio – with husband Marc Muellbauer on bass and Heinrich Köbberling on drums – became a quartet with the addition of Uli Kempendorff on tenor saxophone. Their first album together, *Not Far From Here*, earned high praise on release in 2019 – the *Guardian* newspaper speaking of, "clever, thoughtful, inquisitively contemporary music making," while *DownBeat* was moved to say: "Julia's music, pointed and flexed to the rhythms of emotional desire," meant the quartet was regarded as one of the leading contemporary jazz groups in Europe. Perhaps more importantly, at a deeper level, the album suggested room for further artistic growth and thus enormous promise for the future.

That future has has arrived with *The Next Door*, their second album, recorded in March this year at Studio La Buissonne, Pernes-les-Fontaines in France.

"Since the last album with this quartet, we've been on the road a whole lot," says Julia. "Then so many concerts cancelled, of course, but we had a good feeling about our music together. We worked online, very interesting, a different kind of work, everybody in their own room recording, and sending stuff around, and then another person would add something and send it around. It was totally different because there were different ideas – [that] we could develop. Maybe we wouldn't have developed by our normal way of working together."

The resulting album shows a greater degree of ensemble cohesion: "Since the last album we have had time to develop together as a group, and as a result there is a greater rapport between us [than on our previous album], our interplay is more intuitive, we just do it, you don't think about it or wonder, just

Photos: Peter Hundert

L-R: Heinrich Köbberling, Julia Hülsmann, Marc Muellbauer and Uli Kempendorff

"[Lockdown] was totally different because there were different ideas we could develop... Maybe we wouldn't have developed [them] by our normal way of working"

do it, and there is someone with you," explains Hülsmann. The compositions on *The Next Door* highlight the group's strengths: their confident control and execution of improvisational wisdom, and the rhythmic ease and sophistication of harmonic and rhythmic accompaniment. It is perhaps the most 'jazzy' of her albums: "What I can definitely say, is that with Eli [Kempendorf] we have a player with a very strong jazz background, he is a lot more 'contemporary jazz' than we were before, but we all love that kind of music as well, we played it for many years but not really in the trio context, or in the context where I set poems to music, that was not really the thing. But with his playing it was in the air, and suddenly I started to write new music and realised there were other ideas I wanted to bring into this band, and Marc [Muellbauer] liked the feeling of Uli's language, so it slipped into our music, I really like it, it's a new colour."

What is immediately apparent is Julia's use of contemporary jazz voicings, to a degree greater than on her previous recordings, combined with a non-frantic, almost Scandinavian, approach to improvisation with an openness that is one of its characteristics. But while absorbing elements from American jazz, which all European musicians do, it is handled in a way that makes sense for the quartet's music rather than trying to 'sound' American.

"You know me well enough to know I was never interested in that," she says. "So that is a perfect description. It's always difficult when you do your music and afterwards describe it, things just develop, and I can't really – I just can't explain things, because it's just there, it's not too easy to reflect on things like that."

Interestingly, the album contains two versions of 'Jetzt Noch Nicht': "This is a composition I wrote for the NDR Big Band and I had the feeling I wanted something swinging, combined with my chords and I realised when we play this song with the NDR Big Band it's a really straight forward thing, but when we play it, it's really different.

"The second version came about when we did a soundcheck and I was just playing the melody, very slowly, and Eli entered and he played it with me and he said, 'Ah! We could also play this song like that!' And this is why we did two versions, we just tried it out, there's a slower version of this song, 'Jetzt Noch Nicht,' and the quartet version and they are totally different, so we included both."

Perhaps the performances on the new album that seem to best capture the mood of quiet confidence and creativity of this group are the tunes 'Open Up' and 'Fluid.'

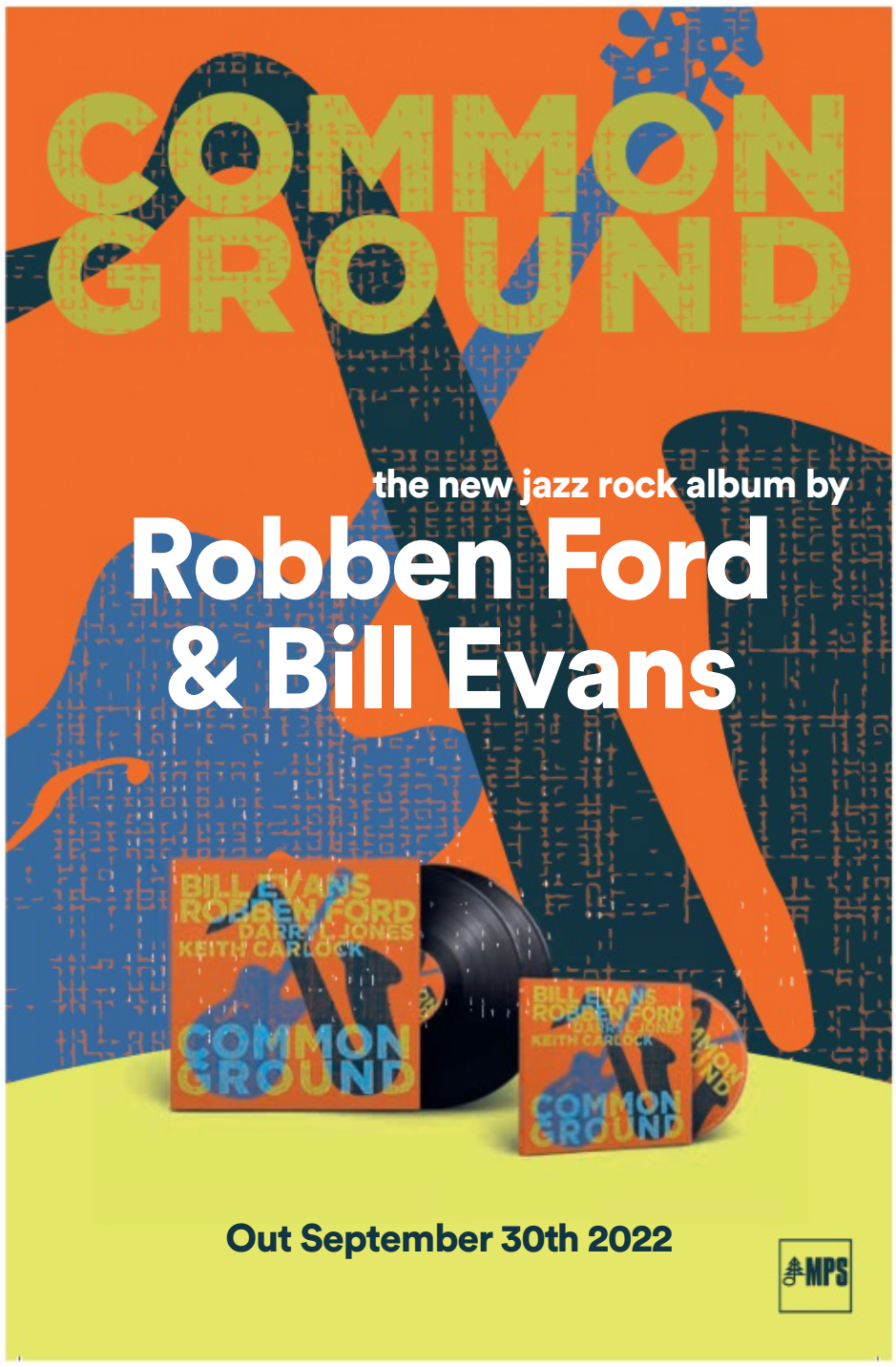
"'Open Up,' that's Uli's tune," explains Julia. "We started to play it when we were on tour, so we have been playing the tune for a while, which was very good for us in the studio because we felt things could happen. It's very playful, it's easy – I kind of play the melody, but not, and this is what Uli told me: 'You are the Joker in this tune, you can do whatever you want.' He plays the melody, I can pick up a few notes of that, or not, and play around – this is what I really like, he perfectly understood what is easy for me or hard, how I work, what music is working for me, so this is what is so nice about this tune, the way it opens up. 'Fluid' is a totally different thing. I wrote this tune for my improvisation book, *Piano Improv*, and the first book is out and now, I am writing music for the second book, and thought I just want an easy texture, and then I found these chords, and from there it just went well, it started with this texture with this nice easy opening and a sound that is, well, 'Fluid'!"

Over the last couple of years, success has slowly crept up on Julia Hülsmann in a way that she barely noticed. She is used to juggling several projects at once, always under pressure, while also being a working mum bringing up, with husband Marc, a young child.

"Well, he's 18 now and things are a lot easier," she smiles. "My career started two years before I became a mother, and I had to deal with it, how to combine the two roles, and somehow it worked. I really knew I wanted to be a musician, it was such a strong feeling within me, and Marc as well, so it was clear to both of us that we want this, we can manage – somehow! Looking back it feels like, well, it was a little stressed at times, but it was possible. We could do it. I realise I'm a very stubborn person, I just want to go through that door and somehow I make it possible, even if I have to climb over it, I'll do that – I just don't give up! Coming quickly up to today, the last two and a half years were pretty challenging for us [because of Covid and not being able to work], but on the other hand, I was very lucky because, just in time, half a year before, I got a full time position at the Berlin University of the Arts. So, we did a lot of work, but very nice work, at home and a steady income. Because of that, what a luxury, I was able to go on writing new music, planning new CDs, because I had a steady income with music! I'm there Monday to Wednesday midday and that includes two courses on songwriting, one of my favourite subjects, always full and there is a waiting list. I think if I had this job 10 years ago, or 15 years ago, it would be a lot more difficult, because now I have built my musical career. I don't have to invest in that 'starting' energy, I now know where exactly to put energy in to make things work.

"Yes, I'm surprised how things are working and how many different projects I have. ECM is just one chapter, I have so many other projects that are not recorded, my octet with with three singers, violin, cello, piano, bass and drums, we do a lot of my favourite songs, Prince, things like that, I have the next big band production in Frankfurt and a whole tour with Christopher Dell on vibes, like 14 concerts at the beginning of next year, there are so many things going on!

"And I'm so glad, it's like a luxury that it's working out. I don't take it for granted at all. I am allowed to go on tour, and then I do the teaching again, so it's working. It's exhausting, I have to say, but I mean, this is where I live! When I am on stage playing my music I know exactly what I am doing, and why I'm doing it."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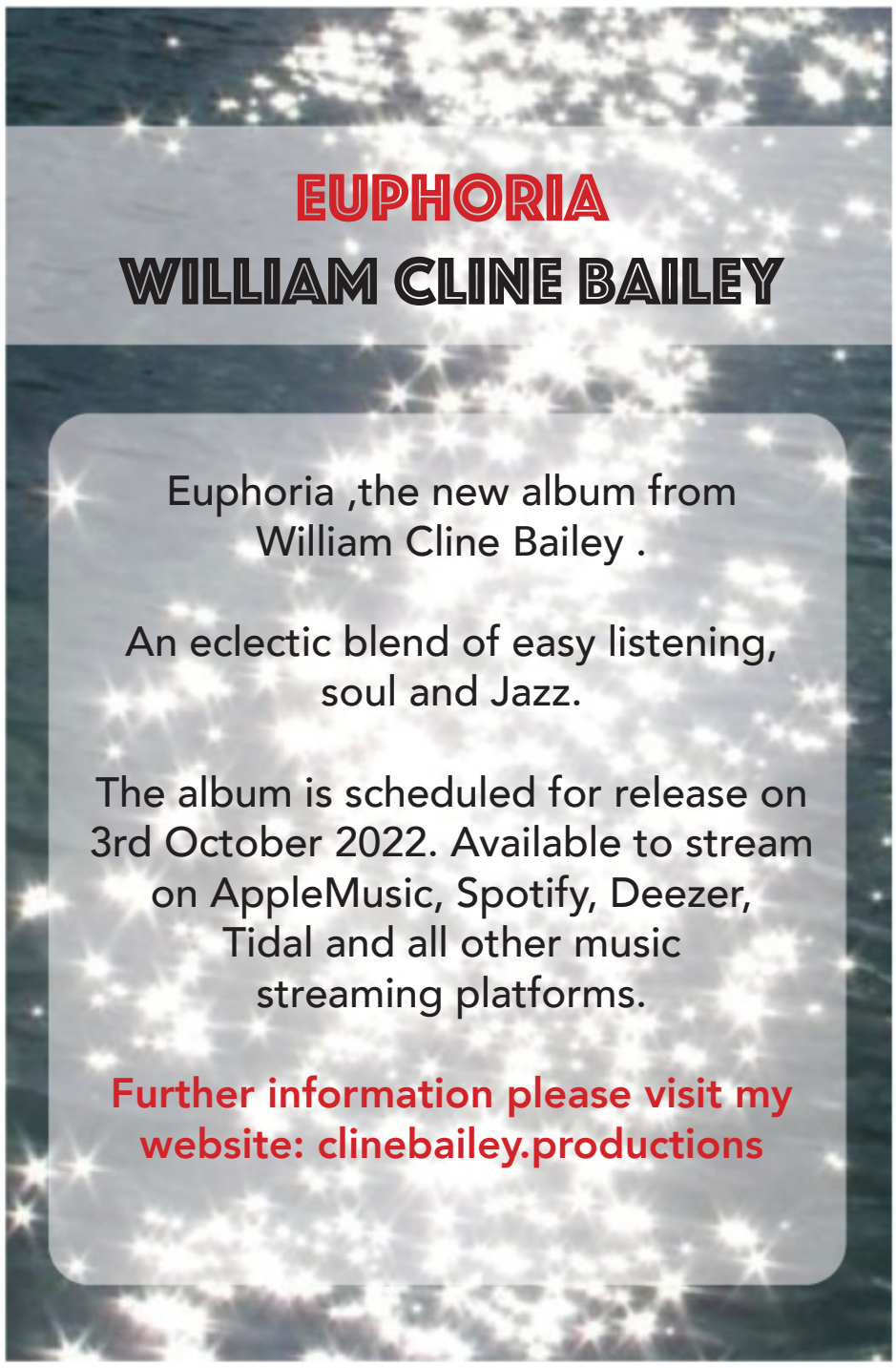
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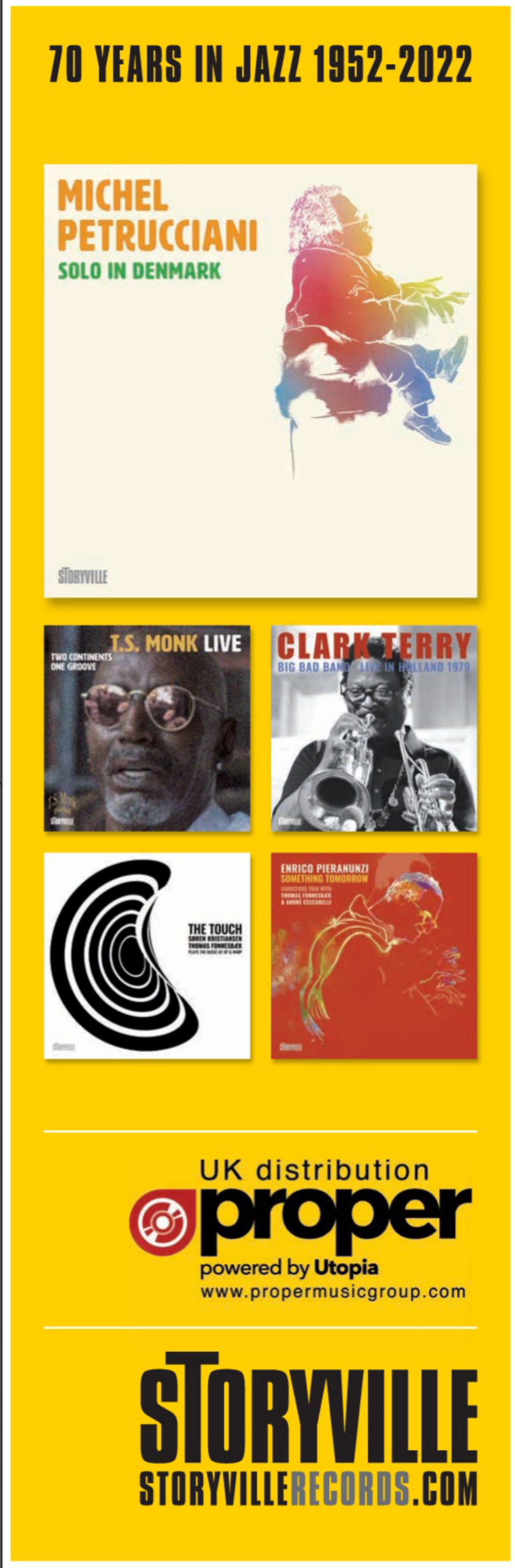
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TRIO FASCINATION

Following a soujourn working solo, pianist-composer **Andrew McCormack** is returning to the trio format with a brand-new album, *Terra Firma*. **Selwyn Harris** meets a musician, back home again in the UK on a firm footing, and moving resolutely forward

Front man McCormack backed by Downard (left) and Youngs (right)

Photo: Pauline Le Divenache

The days when people were waiting for the next hip thing in acoustic piano trio jazz passed some time ago. Back in 2006, when Andrew McCormack released his highly promising BBC Jazz award-winning piano trio debut *Telescope*, the likes of Brad Mehldau, Jason Moran, e.s.t., Avishai Cohen and The Bad Plus had been reinventing mainstream piano-bass-drums jazz with their embrace of everything from rock-song riffage, electronica and hip-hop through to minimalism and Middle-Eastern sounds. Phronesis and Neil Cowley Trio meanwhile, were among those leading the charge back home.

But the 44-year-old pianist-composer Andrew McCormack has never been one for jumping on bandwagons. He was nurtured by Tomorrow's Warriors early on in his career, joining key bands Gary Crosby's Nu Troop and Denys Baptiste's Mercury nominated/MOBO-winning quartet, and continuing the Warriors connection until today with his successful long-time simpatico duo partner/saxophonist Jason Yarde. Since 2007 he's enjoyed both touring and recording with the internationally acclaimed Kyle Eastwood Band and has written classical

commissions for the LSO and Heritage Orchestra under the mentorship of the jazz-influenced New Music composer Mark-Anthony Turnage.

But it wasn't until 2014 that he would make another piano trio studio recording: *First Light* with a New York-based ensemble of bassist Zack Lober and drummer Colin Stranahan, although he tells me he's been putting a trio together every now and then when any decent 'live' performance opportunities arise. It's perhaps no coincidence that on his return to London from New York in 2016 – having spent three years breaking into the jazz scene there – that McCormack started to really assert himself as a bandleader. He made two recordings with his contemporary fusion-jazz project Graviton ("I felt I had to try and differentiate myself a bit musically at the time.") and 2020's *Solo* piano album.

McCormack keeps the momentum going with a new trio album featuring drummer Rod Youngs and bassist Joe Downard, on the prolific UK jazz indie Ubuntu. In many ways it's a fresh start but at the same time he says it feels like he's "come home" as suggested by the title *Terra Firm*a (in Latin, meaning 'solid ground').

"The piano trio was my debut and it's been seven years since I did a trio record and I feel like I've gone out there and really done a lot of exploring musically, and so to return to the trio format which is where I began I feel like I have a lot more maturity than before," he says, speaking to me on WhatsApp video from his home in Camberwell. "You learn these different things and then you come back to it but you have a more experienced and nuanced approach. I think this album is different in that I've been quite purposeful in what the music is. Each track is doing something specific. It's me coming back to where I started from."

McCormack says he began, "working on ideas and skills based around the acoustic piano genre again" when faced with involuntary confinement in the home under the lockdown conditions of 2020 and 21.

"A lot of the music was developed during that period," he says. "I was suddenly at home 24/7 and I wanted to make the most of the time I had available to me. Even though the past couple of years I've been doing the Graviton project which was more of a prog-jazz thing, I suddenly found myself with the acoustic piano trio format. I was practising transcribing Keith Jarrett and bits of Brad Mehldau and I found myself being drawn to work on that side of my playing. It just seemed like a natural development really."

Terra Firma also, belatedly, marks a homecoming in a very literal sense. McCormack returned to London in 2016 on the expiration of his 0-1 visa following three years living in New York.

"It's so fast moving there that you don't necessarily have the time to take stock of what's happening," he says. "You think about things that you've been through later and then you suddenly realise a few things. So one of the things I realised is the musicians there just spend all day everyday either playing, practising or listening to music. That's their existence. It was something I could incorporate in my own life and actually in lockdown that was something that I certainly had. I think it takes time to digest things when you get a lot of information and have a lot of experiences. The thing that I realised is that I can bring some of those attitudes towards music back and have that in my own life in London."

Without life's everyday distractions, lockdown also seemed to bring out both the best and worst in people. A few of the more poignant moments on the album were triggered by the heightened emotions and major events taking place at that time.

There's the self-explanatory 'Fake News', the piano soliloquy 'Cherry Blossom', with its optimism for a post-pandemic rebirth, and 'Prayer for Atonement', a musical commentary on the need for healing following the George Floyd debacle.

"It was an emotional moment for a lot of people," he says. "It was a very tense time. I felt very emotional about what had happened and 'Prayer for Atonement' came out of that time. I'm definitely wearing my heart on my sleeve. It means I hope that we can move on and try and learn to heal from the horrible things that we do to each other. It's a prayer. Without getting too heavy there's a lot of things to be answered for. But at the same time I want for us to move forward as well. 'Cherry Blossom' was a very uplifting, also emotional, moment when lockdown was beginning to ease and it was looking like we could get back to normal life."

"I think it takes time to digest things when you get a lot of information and have a lot of experiences. The thing that I realised is that I can bring some of those attitudes towards music back and have that in my own life in London"

While composing the new material, McCormack already had in mind who he wanted to play with. One of them was the drummer Rod Youngs, a contemporary of McCormack's. The pair go back a long way, initially playing together in Denys Baptiste's Let Freedom Ring Suite band - "I like Rod for trio because he's got a lightness of touch but he can give a lot of power when needed so that works really well with the trio," he says. Conversely bassist Joe Downard is one of the most in-demand young bassists, and his inclusion reflects McCormack's forward-looking attitude.

"Joe is part of a younger generation and I think it's quite important to have some young blood in the band," he says. "Plus he lives very close by me in Camberwell. That's something I had in New York that I really liked. Where I was living in Prospect Park, there were loads of musicians literally just round the corner and you'd get together and play. There's something that really appeals to me about having one of your neighbours in the band."

Talk turns to his other long-term projects, about a potential link-up soon with Jason Yarde, and a Kyle Eastwood band film music album project for which he's currently writing arrangements for a John Williams theme from Eastwood Snr's 1975-directed movie *The Eiger Sanction*. And what about the new trio's touring calendar and the much-talked-about 'Brexit effect'?

"We have gigs in the autumn and I'm starting a new batch in the New Year but they're all in the UK," he says. "I'd like to get the trio out to Europe, that's the goal really. I hope it [Brexit] doesn't close us off from the rest of Europe and networks of musicians because I feel like the UK is already a little bit isolated as an island. You look on a map and some of the venues in Northern France and Belgium are closer than some of the places that we go and play in the rest of the UK. It's like well why can't we just go over there? It certainly feels like that's going to be more of a challenge. The music business is very complicated and I feel like I'm still learning."

See *Terra Firma* review on page 42 this issue

SWINGING BETWEEN THE RAINDROPS

Steely Dan co-founder **Donald Fagen** always had an ambivalent attitude to jazz. On the one hand, he loved it; on the other, he didn't want its influence to be too obvious when the band started out in 1972. The answer? Hide it in plain sight. Fifty years on from the Dan's first album, **Peter Jones** looks back at how Fagen smuggled jazz into the sound of one of the most iconic bands of their era

Listen to 'Aja', 'Walk Between the Raindrops', 'Maxine' or 'Your Gold Teeth II', and you might be forgiven for thinking that Donald Fagen and Steely Dan were essentially jazz musicians. All that gorgeous harmony! Those super-cool horn sections! How could this *not* be jazz?

In fact, I would personally argue that Fagen has earned his place alongside Irving Berlin, Kurt Weill, George Gershwin, Harold Arlen and Richard Rodgers in creating some of the greatest popular music of the 20th century. And he did it by combining jazz with other musical genres.

Although Steely Dan were first and foremost a rock band, for Fagen, jazz actually came first. His mother loved the composers of the Great American Songbook - the Gershwins, Harold Arlen, Harry Warren, Burton Lane. In her youth, Elinor Fagen (then Rosenberg) had sung with a jazz trio at a hotel in the Catskills under the stage name Ellen Ross. Unfortunately, a bad case of stage fright just as she was preparing to sing on the *Major Bowes Amateur Hour* radio show ended her brief showbiz career. In the early days of Steely Dan, her son Donald would also suffer quite badly from pre-show nerves.

As a teenager in the early 1960s, he would often travel by himself into Manhattan from his native Passaic, New Jersey, and head for the Village Vanguard to hear Mingus, Earl 'Fatha' Hines, Willie 'The Lion' Smith or Bill Evans. When he started playing piano, the pianist he tried to emulate was Red Garland. He loved the way Oliver Nelson arranged the horns on *The Blues and the Abstract Truth*. And his favorite studio engineer was Rudy Van Gelder, responsible for some of the greatest recordings on the Blue Note, Prestige and Impulse! labels during the late 1950s and early 1960s. But most of all, as his interest in jazz deepened, he began to appreciate Duke Ellington, and studied the master's compositional techniques.

In their own songwriting, Fagen and his musical partner Walter Becker strove for the same clarity and consistency that they heard in Ellington's music. To them Duke had a vision that remained almost unchanged over the decades: the slickness of the Steely Dan recordings from the 1970s was because Fagen and Becker wanted their music to sound as clear and consistent as Duke's. They also followed his example when it came to arranging their songs: "More and more we've been going back to Ellington and Jelly Roll Morton," Donald once explained. "It wasn't just verse-chorus, they had little breaks and all kinds of little embellishments and written-out sections that really made tunes better." On Steely Dan's 2011 Shuffle Diplomacy tour, the front of Fagen's keyboard featured a huge photograph of Duke, no doubt to the puzzlement of many audience members. Fagen felt that his and Becker's songs were derived more instrumentally than vocally. Ellington's material, he thought, didn't work particularly well as songs because Duke was writing for specific players in his band – giving them lines he thought they could play well. Fagen and Becker were writing for Fagen's voice rather than for instrumental performers, but their jazz background caused them to lean toward melodies that followed an Ellingtonian chord-based structure.

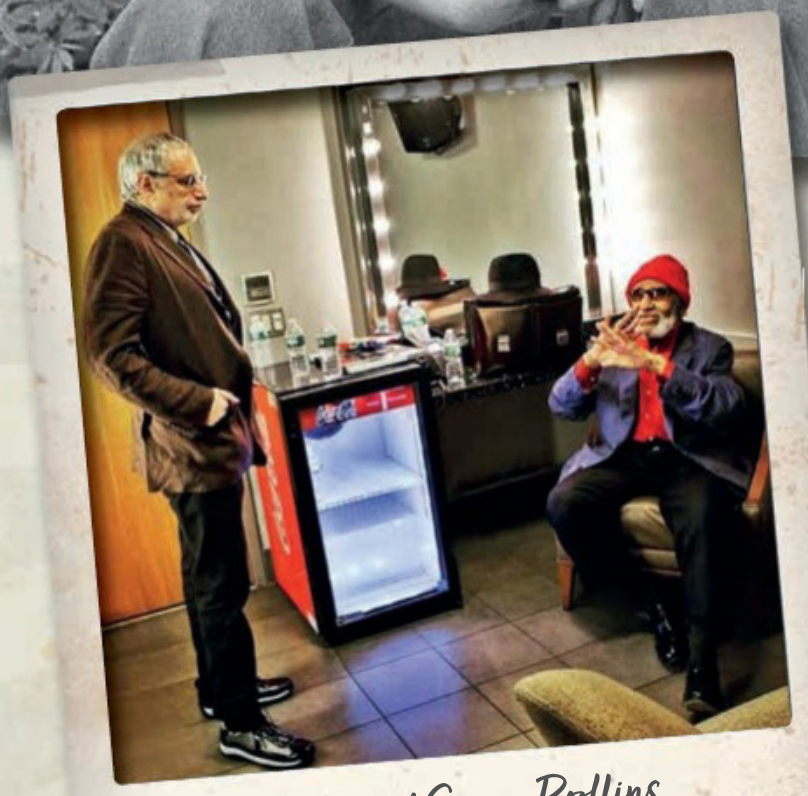
The duo's compositions also adhered to the basic pop song forms, with some variations, that people had been listening to for most of the 20th century. Many of the popular songs of the 1930s and 40s were based on the hallowed AABA format.

"We're pretty traditional as far as that goes," admitted Fagen, "and I think that's the reason for the popularity of it." But what they *weren't* trying to write was jazz. Instead, they tried to combine different kinds of music and make them work together. And so, alongside the conventions of popular song, there was rock, R&B, blues, soul, jazz, pop, country, funk, Brecht and Weill's German art-cabaret, Bach and Stravinsky, along with the Henry Mancini 'faux luxe' TV themes that Donald had loved as a child.

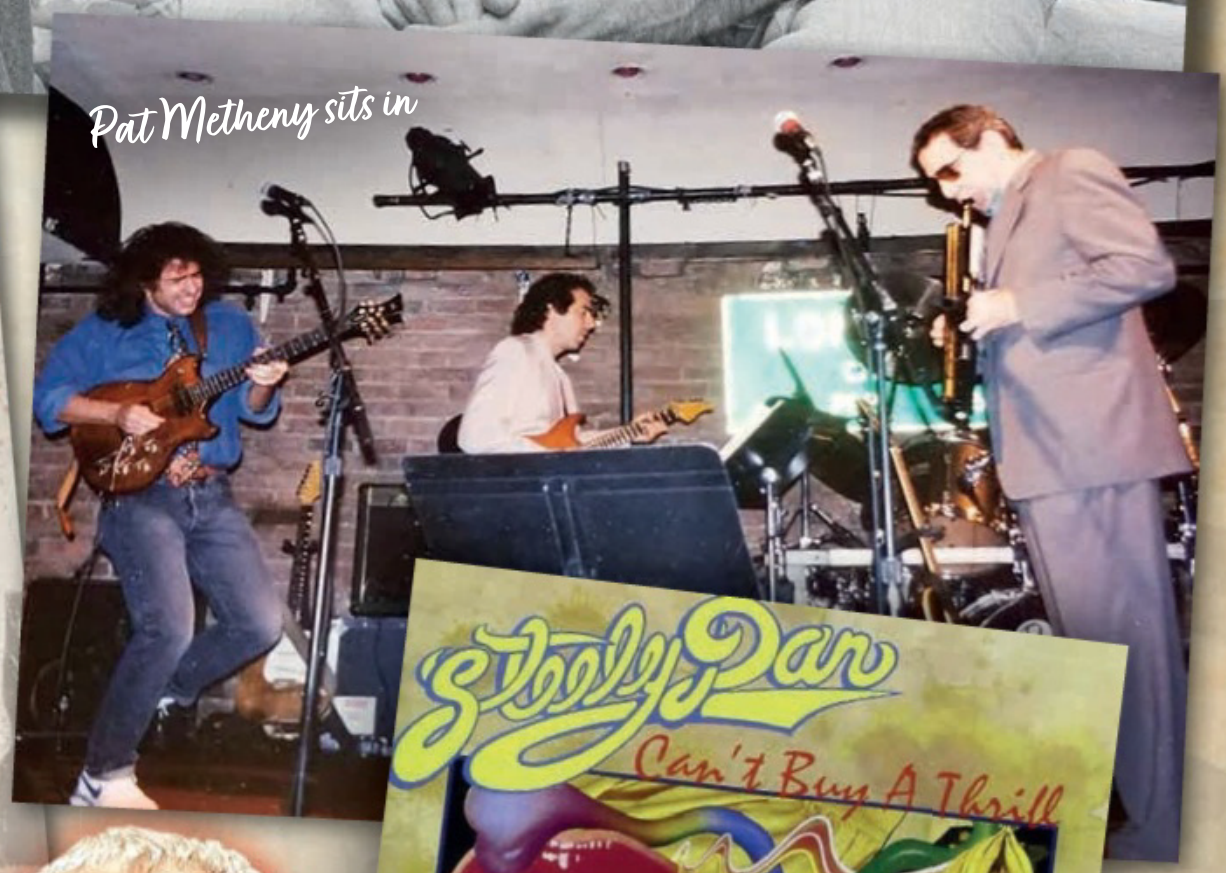
"We like to use something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue," was how he described it.

There was once a little too much borrowing: Fagen and Becker were accused of stealing a musical idea from Keith Jarrett: similarities were noticed between 'Gaucho', the title track of Steely Dan's 1980 album, and a tune called 'Long As You Know You're Living Yours' from Jarrett's album *Belonging*. Fagen knew Jarrett was in his head when he wrote 'Gaucho', but they went ahead anyway. When he found out, Jarrett sued, and won. *[Interestingly, Horace Silver didn't sue over the similarity of the Dan's 'Rikki Don't Lose That Number' to his own 'Song For My Father' – Ed]*.

From the beginning, the Steely Dan songs were built with twists. For example, 'Kings' (from their debut *Can't Buy a Thrill*) starts off sounding conventional in structure, before drifting quite far from the pop format, being structured ABCC (twice), followed by a break of 12 bars (D), a guitar solo over AA, then



Fagen and Sonny Roollins



Pat Metheny sits in

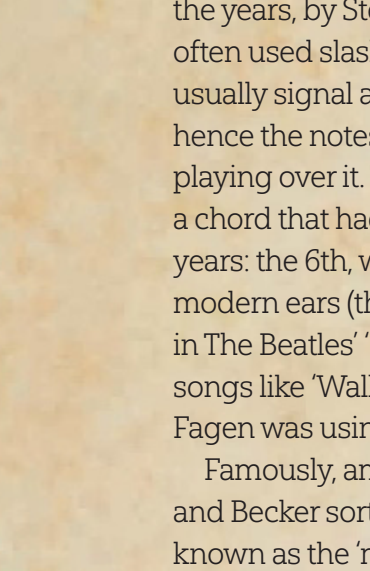
vocal over BC, a tag (one-time only ending – a common device in jazz) repeating the last line twice more, and finally a fade with an extra bar in 2/4 time. 'Daddy Don't Live in That New York City No More', with its bluesy guitar and funky backing, sounds at first as if it's going to be a conventional 12-bar blues, but it's not even an altered blues, being 62 bars long and following an extended AABA pattern bracketed by an intro and a fade. Each A section is 18 bars long. Adding a 2-bar instrumental break to the conventional 16 bar structure was an idea they borrowed from Motown records: for example, the Four Tops hit 'Reach Out' includes a verse of 10 bars, a pre-chorus section of five bars and a chorus of nine bars.)

Musicians have been fascinated, over the years, by Steely Dan's harmony. They often used slash chords, which in jazz usually signal a particular mode, and hence the notes available to any soloist playing over it. They also reintroduced a chord that had been out of fashion for years: the 6th, which sounds cheesy to modern ears (think of the very last chord in The Beatles' 'She Loves You'). Later, in songs like 'Walk Between the Raindrops', Fagen was using super-jazzy 13ths.

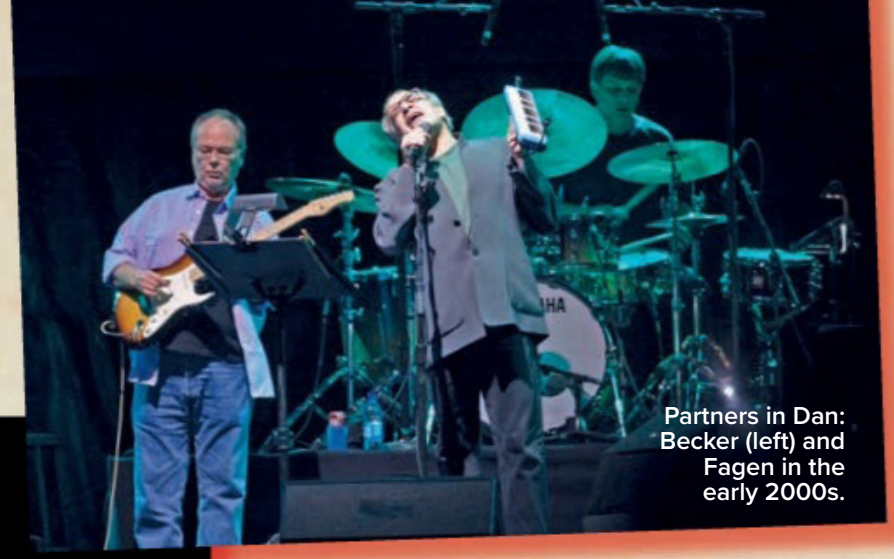
Famously, among musicians, he and Becker sort-of invented a chord known as the 'mü major' (designated by the Greek letter μ) that became their signature sound. The mü major simply adds a major 2nd to a conventional triad. Donald became aware of it through the writing of Stephen Sondheim. As he and Becker put it in their tongue-in-cheek introduction to an early Steely Dan songbook: "The μ major chord is the most frequently used stylistic device in the arsenal of music effects responsible for defining and maintaining the distinctive Steely Dan sound. Without the μ major chord it would be impossible to achieve the airy, modern, almost jazzy quality that the sensitive listener can detect in just about every Steely Dan recording."

Of all the Steely Dan albums, *Katy Lied* is the one that makes the most frequent use of the mü major, including the songs 'Rose Darling', 'Doctor Wu', 'Your Gold Teeth II', and 'Any World (That I'm Welcome To)'. Variations of it appear on all the albums, from *Can't Buy a Thrill* (1972) to *Everything Must Go* (2003).

Steely Dan were a hugely successful pop-rock band, and such techniques just shouldn't have worked. Dense jazz harmony was not always welcome to the ears of their young audience, yet they managed the trick of smuggling jazz into the songs, rendering it palatable by making it sound as smooth and seamless as possible, as Burt Bacharach had before them. As Becker explained: "We learned that jazz being the ever-unpopular musical form in America that it is, once people pegged that what you were doing was jazz, they didn't like it anymore. They tended to dismiss what you were doing as no longer appropriate to the musical milieu of the 1970s. We had to use the humor elements and some of the pop music and jazz harmonies very sparingly."



In 1978 Woody Herman paid them a compliment when he recorded a side of Steely Dan tunes – with Chick Corea on the other side – for his album *Chick, Donald, Walter & Woodrow*. It featured two of the many contemporary jazz musicians who had already played on Steely Dan albums: Victor Feldman (who arranged a new version of 'I Got the News') and Tom Scott (who soloed on the same track).


Partners in Dan: Becker (left) and Fagen in the early 2000s.

Fagen sings!

Photos this page: Tim Dickeson

"To them Duke had a vision: the slickness of the Dan recordings of the 1970s was because Fagen and Becker wanted their music to sound as clear and consistent as Ellington's"

By then, the rollcall of jazz stars who had played on Steely Dan albums was truly impressive: Feldman appeared on every Steely Dan album before he died in 1987. The cumulative saxophone section alone was pretty mind-blowing: Phil Woods, Jerome Richardson, Ernie Watts, Plas Johnson, Ronnie Cuber, David Sanborn, Michael Brecker, Pete Christlieb... Then there were trumpeters Snooky Young and Randy Brecker, bassists Ray Brown and Wilton Felder, keyboardists Don Grolnick and Joe Sample and drummer Steve Gadd. All of them sprinkled jazz fairy-dust over the classic Dan albums of the 1970s. But no single contribution was more extraordinary than Wayne Shorter's tenor solo on the title track of the *Aja* album.

At first Shorter wasn't interested. He didn't do session work. As far as he was concerned, Steely Dan were just another rock band with a silly name. ABC Dunhill Records President Steve Diener called him, but the answer was still no. The person who finally convinced him was Village Recorder studio manager Dick LaPalm, who knew Shorter from Weather Report sessions there.

LaPalm assured him that Fagen and Becker were nice guys, that they recorded there frequently, and not only did they listen to a lot of old jazz records, they even talked about the saxophonist Jackie McLean. (In fact, Donald and Walter used the term 'McLeaning it' when someone was playing a little sharp.)

This time, Shorter agreed.

"That Friday, I walked down to Studio A," said LaPalm. "Donald was dressed in a starched striped shirt - white with blue stripes; pretty spiffy compared to the T shirts he customarily wore in the studio." They had already sent Shorter a demo tape and Larry Carlton's seven-page chart for 'Aja'. "And he was great," remembered Donald. "He took some time with it. We did a couple of takes and he wanted to look at it some more. He said, 'Give me a minute.' He went over to the piano with the chart, and he was over there for a good half an hour, messing with scales." Walter Becker added that Shorter "was trying to approach it in a different way than a bebop player would typically approach something like that." When he was ready, the saxophonist came back and did three or four takes, all of which the duo were pleased with. The resultant track is one of the three or four most lustrous jewels in the Steely Dan crown.

Peter Jones's biography *Nightfly: The Life of Steely Dan's Donald Fagen* is published by Chicago Review Press at the end of September 2022

TURNING POINT

“It was a record that I couldn’t define – not rock, not jazz, it’s crossing a lot of genres. On top of all that, they’re rocking out!”

Powerhouse drummer **Makaya McCraven** tells **Brian Glasser** about the Mahavishnu Orchestra album which has inspired him throughout his career

It’s so hard to pick one album! But let’s say… Mahavishnu Orchestra, *Birds Of Fire*. I heard it when I was in high school, probably 14 years old. Around that time, I was starting to jam with lots of musicians; and we’d just started a hip-hop group. But also I’d been doing gigs with my own band, playing behind my mom [singer Ágnes Zsigmondi]. Lots of her stuff was in 5/8 or 7/8, all odd metres, and I was into that.

I was getting into the Dave Holland quintet of that time; but also what I was listening to was hip-hop, MTV, Nirvana, stuff like that; or Bob Marley, James Brown – things that were right down the middle. I was searching for music as far and wide as I could. Plus, I used to watch a lot of drum videos with my brother Chris – you know, ‘how to play like Buddy Rich’! Chris was a Billy Cobham fan; and he thought this record would be a cool for me to explore. So he gave me the CD and said, “Check this out – you’ll learn something from the rhythms.” I put it on my Discman [portable CD player], and I just remember the sensation of never having heard music like that! It was fusing all these rhythms and crazy virtuosic playing. I loved John McLaughlin’s raging guitar solos, and the drumming, and the world music kind of sound. It connected with the broader space of the music my parents made. It was a record that I couldn’t define – not rock, not jazz, it’s crossing a lot of genres. On top of all that, they’re rocking out! There’s even a couple of funky tracks in there. It hit a lot of points for me; and it really helped me think I could follow my own thing.

When I was younger, what I’d been hearing at home was a combination of *A Love Supreme* and *Bitches Brew* - and *Kind of Blue* too; plus Led Zep, The Beatles, Eastern musical folk music. My parents were both always interested in world music from all over – Indian, African, European classical. It was a pretty open-minded household. All the records they themselves made were some kind of fusion – not fusion as a genre, but as a concept. And Mahavishnu was an early point of fusion [the genre] before you hit the digital moment in the 1980s when it started to drift further away from its jazz roots. The music was perhaps a little aggressive for my mom’s tastes, but my dad [drummer Stephen McCraven] could hear the links with what he and his generation had been doing.

‘Fusion’ was definitely a bad word in those days – as was ‘jazz’, for that matter. When I was coming up in the 90s, the idea of being called a jazz musician was a scary one; and for different reasons to just being a critique of jazz in itself – it was more because of the idea that if you played jazz, you weren’t going to work! A common thing for me and my peers was if someone said, ‘I hear you play jazz’, we’d reply, ‘Well, I play all kinds of things.’

I can see how *Birds Of Fire* connects with my upcoming record [*In These Times*] – like the Mahavishnu Orchestra, I’m wanting to achieve levels of excellence on my instrument. So that’s a simple thing, which has nothing to do with style and sound – it’s about proficiency. Then also the rhythmic aspect – changing meters, time feels, polyrhythms – a lot of the writing I’ve been doing is concentrating on that stuff and filtering it through my lens so that it comes across to a wide audience, not just as a kind of experiment. *Birds Of Fire* does that for me – all these cool time signatures, but it’s a rock band! They played that stuff in front of thousands of people; and that was cool. I thought, “I wanna play the music that I’m interested in, and I wanna go deep into my instrument, deep into learning about music from around the world, and to find my own thing; and I want to do it for lots of people so that the complicated stuff translates”. The mixture of level of depth with popular sounds – the dynamic tension between those – is something I’ve always strived for.

I’ve never met Billy Cobham – I think he lives in Switzerland – but he’s high up on my list! He can play across those big drum-sets like with Mahavishnu, but he can swing his ass off too. And he’s also, with his own records, a great drummer-bandleader. There’s not that many of us out there, so he’s been a role model for me that way too!

Mahavishnu Orchestra
Birds Of Fire
Columbia (1973)
PERSONNEL: John McLaughlin (g), Jerry Goodman (vn), Jan Hammer (ky), Rick Laird (b) and Billy Cobham (d, perc).
TRACKS: ‘Birds Of Fire’, ‘Miles Beyond’, ‘Celestial Terrestrial Commuters’, ‘Sapphire Bullets Of Pure Love’, Thousand Island Park’, ‘Hope’, ‘One Word’, ‘Sanctuary’, ‘Open Country Joy’ and ‘Resolution’.

Albums: New Releases

The UK's most definitive review section – Jazz and beyond

★★★★★ Landmark Recording ★★★★ Excellent ★★★ Good ★★ Average ★ Disappointing

According To The Sound
In-Tension

Losen Records LOS 2722 (CD) ★★★★

Adam Parry-Davies (p, ky, MIDI keyboard), Patrick Case (g, syn, strings, programming, MIDI p, string arr). Plus: Gary Alesbrook, Mike Rodriguez, Ambrose Akinmusire, Theo Croker (t), James Morton (as), Sam Shotokova, James Carter (ts), Jim Barr, Adam King, Pasquale Votino (b), Otto Hashmi, Alex Hutchings (el b), Jake Goldbas, Justin Brown (d), Alex Fryer (cond) plus The Academy of St Mary-le-Bow (strings). Rec. date not stated

This is the second release from British 'concept studio band' According To The Sound, aka core duo, pianist Adam Parry-Davies and guitarist/programmer/synth player Patrick Case, supplemented by an exciting array of musicians recorded in the US. And it's the second to bear a title with a hyphen; in fact the first actually had two: *Prism-α-Ning* (a play on Thelonious Monk's 'Rhythm-a-Ning'). Hyphens are to be encouraged, of course, as are hard titles and bits of titular wordplay that make you furrow your brow: *In-Tension* appears to reference frustrated intentions owing to Covid and – I'm assuming – tensions within the carefully plotted musical compositions and perhaps beyond resulting from those frustrated intentions. Clearly process is an important part of the story too.

So the nomenclature and press materials prepare you for a particular kind of listening activity and experience. It's nice to be able to report that, although clever and concept-heavy, the resulting music is a fun and gripping listen, any abstract theorizing matched with visceral delivery. Sweet musical reason emerges floated on a simple classical piano riff and a bed of strings from the free-jazz chaos of the opening of 'Noise of Time'; you're never quite sure where the hazily trip-hoppy, then plain groovy 'Heavy Smoke' is heading. There's fine playing from the likes of Ambrose Akinmusire and James Carter throughout.

Robert Shore

Cecil Alexander
Introducing Cecil Alexander

Heartcore HCR-15 (CD, DL) ★★★

Cecil Alexander (el g), Will Gorman (org) and Steven Crammer (d). Rec. 2022

The press release for this album, out on Kurt Rosenwinkel's own imprint, starts by lauding Mr Alexander's Instagram profile and number of followers, rather than, say, his tenure at Berklee. As the album is released on the unfashionable digital download and CD rather than the hipster vinyl, and Insta continues to lose ground to TikTok, we may wonder if Mr Alexander is riding the tech wave forwards or backwards.

Regardless, this stripped-back debut fully justifies the Rosenwinkel endorsement - Cecil Alexander is a superb guitarist in the bop tradition, with bags of taste, swing and chops. He favours a dry, crisp semi-acoustic tone with plenty of string attack over the recent fashion for the soft reverb-drenched sound, and works with dancing, rhythmically precise single-note lines rather than the kind of impressionistically open, extended chord voicings you'll hear from the likes of Gilad Hekselman. As such he's identifiably following in the tradition of the mighty Wes, George Benson and Grant Green (who gets a namecheck on the ballad 'Bright Green') rather than John Abercrombie or Mick Goodrick, and doing a fine job as well.

A Donny Hathaway cover veers close to smooth jazz, albeit in a very beguiling way, but the twisty high-velocity 'Shug' shows what he can do when he puts his foot on the gas: his speed, groove, crisp articulation and flow of melodic ideas are truly impressive, matched with a real soulful feeling for the blues. The supporting cast do a sterling job, but Alexander is the star throughout. If there are no surprises here, there are no flaws either: this is a very likeable record, and guitar fans in particular should check it out.

Eddie Myer

Roxana Amed

Photo: Sony Music

Roxana Amed
Unánime

Sony Latin (DL) ★★★★

Roxana Amed (v) plus various personnel including Tim Jago (el g), Martin Bejerano (p), Edward Perez (b), Ludwig Afonso (d). Rec. date not stated

This follow-up to 2020's brilliant *Ontology* brings together a stellar line-up of guest artists from Latin America and Spain. Album opener 'Flamenco Sketches' sees Amed's wordless vocalese enveloped by flamenco patterns articulated by cajón and handclaps, coupled with Mark Small's rich bass clarinet work and Niño Josele's lyrical acoustic guitar solo. Penned by Argentinian songwriter Luis Alberto Spinetta, 'Nueva Luna, Mundo Arjo' finds Amed duetting powerfully with vocalist/bassist Pedro Aznar (erstwhile member of the Pat Metheny Group), while in the company of acoustic guitarist Chico Pinheiro she digs deep into the melancholy of Egberto Gismonti's 'Agua Y Vino'.

Pianist Martin Bejerano's dancing 'Dos Tribus' explores the superimposition of duple and triple metres, with Amed and Mark Small's soprano sax soaring over the top in thrilling unison. Co-composed by Amed and bassist Edward Perez, 'A Veces No, Siempre' is a moving homage to revered *cajonero* Julio 'Chocolate' Algendones with whom Perez performed during a two-year stay in Lima. One of the earliest songs written by the Mexican pianist and composer Miguel Pous, the romantic ballad 'En Mi Soledad' is a standout, with Amed's enchanting vocal blending mellifluously with Bejerano's piano. 'Los Tres

Golpes', one of the 41 *Danzas Cubanas* written by the Cuban pianist and composer, Ignacio Cervantes, is a blazing *tour de force* in a piano duet arrangement featuring Bejerano and legendary Cuban pianist Chucho Valdés, along with bassist Armando Gola and drummer Dafnis Prieto.

Venezuelan trumpet player and vocalist Linda Briceño joins Amed in a fine duet on César Prato's 'Nostalgia Andina', and Amed dips into the world of contemporary classical music in an arrangement of the first movement of Colombian producer and songwriter Julio Reyes Copello's 'Duo Concertante'. To conclude, Amed returns to Cervantes' Danzas Cubanas – again featuring the two-piano line-up of Bejerano and Valdés – with a beguiling take on the forlorn 'Adiós a Cuba', to which she appends new lyrics.

Peter Quinn

JoVia Armstrong
The Antidote Suite

Black Earth Records BE777003 (CD, DL)

★★★★

JoVia Armstrong (hybrid cajon kit), Lesley Deshazor (v, vla), Jeff Parker, Isaiah Sharkey (g), Damon Warmack (el b), Amr Fahmy (p), Nicole Mithcell (f), Yaw Ageyman and Teh'Ray Hale (v).
Rec. 2021

The Detroit-raised drummer, percussionist and educator JoVia Armstrong self-released her debut album *Fuzzy Blue Robe Chronicles* back in 2009, prompting double takes with her leftfield explorations of black autonomy and what's been termed black nerd consciousness. Too in demand, perhaps, to hurry a follow-up – she's worked with luminaries from Aretha Franklin to Pat Metheny, house music don Theo Parrish to Malian kora star Ballaké Sissoko – Armstrong is also enrolled in a PhD at the University of California Irvine.

Her second solo album, the intriguing, prismatic, admirably experimental *The Antidote Suite*, turns out to be the soundtrack for the Black Index – a travelling exhibition of prints, drawings, performance and digital technology that champions black self-representation as an antidote to colonialist images. But while the album's five pieces were recorded as accompaniment to the visuals, there's nuance in the atmospherics, stories folded into the swirls and grooves of 'Shades and Shapes', into the lo-fi 'Zebra' with its vocals by Chicago great Yaw Agyeman, into 'Meditations on Oyu (Mu)', in which flute leads and violin lines sear through guitar arpeggios. Expansive, mostly instrumental, all of it intended for healing, *The Antidote Suite* takes in dub, reggae and rap and the space-is-the-place vibe of Sun Ra. Ancient-to-future music: embracing the collective, encouraging transformation.

Jane Cornwell

Will Bernard
Pond Life

Dreck to Disk DT004 (CD) ★★★★

Will Bernard (g), John Medeski (p, org), Tim Berne (saxes), Ches Smith (d) and Chris Lightcap (b). Rec. date not stated

The guitarist Will Bernard has occasionally been referred to as a musician deserving of more recognition. There is however no lack of such appreciation among his musical peers including the premier cast assembled here on a new recording, his 12th as leader since 1998. Back then Bernard was making a breakthrough as a member of the saxophonist Peter Apfelbaum's Hieroglyphics Ensemble and played on Don Cherry's *Multikulti* album. He's been an experimental coast-to-coast NY downtown guitarist since working with Stanton Moore's B3-guitar trio, Tom Waits and Charlie Hunter among others.

On *Pond Life* the guitarist-composer follows a trail from Ornette to Hendrix, Beefheart and country blues through to Sco funk and Frisell/Ribot's downtown fusions. He uses effects frequently, restlessly at times but in an understated and discerning way, knowing when's the right moment to put his foot down or not, while utilising space in a way that develops ambience.

Heavyweight guests - organist/pianist John Medeski and saxophonist Tim Berne - make their presence felt while committing to the soundworld of the leader's wittily-crafted set of tunes. Not to underplay the role of drummer Ches Smith and Craig Taborn, sideman/bassist Chris Lightcap, whose grungy grooves are some of the best bits about Bernard's crunchily off-centre, psych/alt.rock-fuelled brand of jazz.

He's due some four-star love and recognition here, for sure. **Selwyn Harris**

Anteloper
Pink Dolphins

International Anthem IARC56 (CD, LP, DL)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Jaimie Branch (t, elec, perc, v), Jason Nazry (d, syn), Jeff Parker (el g, el b, perc, syn) and Chad Taylor (mbira).
Rec. date not stated

Dave Gisler Trio
See You Out There

Intakt CD378 (CD) ★★★

Dave Gisler (el g), Raffaele Bossard (b), Lionel Friedli (d), plus Jaimie Branch (t) and David Murray (ts).
Rec. 1–2 November 2021

Eli Winter
Eli Winter

Three Lobed Recordings LPTLR140 (LP, DL) ★★★★

Eli Winter, Cameron Knowler (g, el g), Tyler Damon (d), Sam Wagster (pedal steel), Yasmin Williams, Ryley Walker (el g), Jordan Reyes (syn), Jaimie Branch (flhn), Whitney Johnson (vla), David Grubbs (harmonium), Liz Downing (bowed banjo, v) and Giulia Chiappetta (v). Rec. date not stated.

Three releases, all featuring trumpeter-composer Jaimie Branch, and all given extra – and unwelcome – piquancy by her sudden death in late August aged just 39; and all demonstrating not just Branch's extraordinary instrumental talents, but also her openness and fecundity, and her ability to judge the moment perfectly.

Of the three, the Anteloper release would have been the closest to her heart. Anteloper were (one presumes they can no longer exist as a functioning unit) a duo, featuring Branch and drummer Jason Nazry. On this, their debut album (but third release, following the *Tour Beats* and *Kudu* EPs), they teamed up with producer-guitar whizz Jeff Parker and Branch's old Fly Or Die bandmate Chad Taylor. This is a very different project from FoD, however – for all their angularity and unruliness, FoD were an acoustic jazz band; Anteloper were electric (quite literally), blending 1970s Miles with Autechre's electronica, Tortoise's post-rock, plus the woozy end of trip-hop, with disco thrown into the mix for good measure.Branch put it better than I ever could: "We're improvisers first and we're bringing 'moment music' into the other zones of hip-hop and electronic music, drum-machine music, sound-system culture..."

Now, especially, *Pink Dolphins* is a disconcerting experience, difficult to describe, as it constantly moves in unexpected directions (sometimes unexpectedly catchy, as on the single 'Earthlings'). One can't help thinking how much more this force of nature had to give. Judging from this compelling album, a whole lot more.

On *See You Out There*, she's a guest (Gisler has been a frequent collaborator since the *Zurich Concert* album of 2020), but her presence makes a hell of an impact: the lengthy opener 'Bastards On The Run' is quite simply one of the best things she ever did, a frantic, straight-outta-the-traps workout that the rest of the album, while good, never quite measures up to.

Chicagoan *wunderkind* Eli Winter, meanwhile, is an astonishingly gifted guitarist who is confident and unselfish enough to allow his collaborators to shine. 'Dayenu', which features Branch on fugelhorn, may well be one of the very last things she ever recorded. But mourning for the loss of one great talent should not blind us to the rise of another – and on this evidence, Winter is certainly one to watch. **Kevin Whitlock**

Alan Broadbent
Like Minds

Savant SCD2198 (CD) ★★★

Alan Broadbent (p), Harvie S (b) and Billy Mintz (d). Rec. 29 April and 27 Jul 2021

Alongside Broadbent's frequent work with vocalists – including not only Georgia Mancio but Sheila Jordan (see below) – he is a relaxed and lyrical pianist. And, although this was foreshadowed by his contributions to Charlie Haden's Quartet West, his continued exposure as the lead instrumentalist can only be good news. The present recording can be seen as a follow-up to two previous albums by the same personnel (reviewed in *Jazzwise* 243 and 260) and it continues the good feeling of those events. As on those occasions, Alan brings a varied selection of material with four relatively uncommon played popular songs, including Kurt Weill's 'This Is New', along with jazz standards rarely heard in trio situations, by Parker, Rollins, Powell and Mobley.

The one Broadbent original, 'Prelude To Peace', is a highlight but the whole programme flows with ease and unhackneyed improvisation, despite reminiscences of heroes such as Bill Evans and Lennie Tristano. Harvey S takes the occasional solo but mostly plays a stimulating backing, while the lesser-known Mintz fits in with admirable discretion. Not a record to knock you over the head, but one to warm your heart and stimulate your ears.

Brian Priestley

Owen Broder
Hodges: Front and Center Vol. 1

Outside In Music OiM 224 (CD)

★★★★

Owen Broder (as, bs), Riley Mulherkar (t), Carmen Staaf (p), Barry Stephenson (b) and Bryan Carter (d). Rec. 10-11 September 2021

Broder is yet another of the many highly competent New York-based players who seem to have passed local audiences by.

He records regularly, teaches a lot, and runs a whole series of interesting band projects yet we don't know about him. That is, until now.

Writer Willard Jenkins applauds the fact that a current jazz musician should wish to pay tribute to Johnny Hodges, a distinctive soloist whose inclinations were markedly different to this favoured by Broder's usual affiliates. Happily, this conjunction of performance and intentions works delightfully throughout. From the opening bars of 'Royal Garden Blues', using the 1959 *Back to Back* album template, we know we're in safe hands. Mulherkar handles Sweets Edison's part with commendable spirit while Broder evokes Hodges without parody, his sound appropriate even if he lacks Hodges' distinctive swoop. Staaf is far too wise to imitate Duke Ellington, so turns in a series of inventive choruses of his own. And yes, this little band swings. Having picked other Hodges specialities like 'Viscount', a Hodges-Mercer Ellington collaboration which lopes along, Broder unfurls his baritone on '18 Carrots for Rabbit', the Gerry Mulligan piece written for his album with Hodges, and helps us to remember Harry Carney.

Elsewhere Broder broadens his attack, moving his Hodges affiliation into near-contemporary country, Mulherkar and Staaf with him all the way. I'd like to know more about Mr Broder and his other activities. For now, there's pleasures aplenty here.

Peter Vacher

Butcher Brown
Butcher Brown Presents Triple Trey featuring Tennishu and R4ND4ZZO BIGB4ND

Concord Jazz 724639 (CD, LP, DL)

★★★★

DJ Harrison (prod, ky), Corey Fonville (d), Andrew Randazzo (b), Marcus 'Tennishu' Tenney (t, sax), Morgan Burrs (el g) plus R4ND4ZZO BIGB4ND. Rec. date not stated

From the moment the fat horn chords slide into Kendrick Lamar's soon-to-be-jazz-standard 'How Much A Dollar Cost?', it's clear Butcher Brown's new record has real depth. The Richmond, Virginia outfit has always had a taste for big grooves, but *Triple Trey* departs from the comfortable backbeats of previous album *#KingButch* and arrives at something much more profound.

The big new addition is the R4ND4ZZO BIGB4ND: tight, detailed and vibrant arrangements with all the heavy horn stylings of Hypnotic Brass Ensemble or Nubiyan Twist. As the project reaches its climax on the classic Notorious B.I.G. track 'Unbelievable', there's a comparison to prolific Dilla/Slum Village coverers Abstract Orchestra – imagine jazz rap, just with loads of instruments – but elsewhere, the originals maintain a freshness of feel, as the jaunty flow of Marcus 'Tennishu' Tenney clashes with the plush carpet of lower brass sound.

'Liquid Light' and 'Cusian' are standout tracks, with the irrepressible Corey Fonville on form throughout. A future live show with the whole ensemble is a tasty prospect indeed.

Hugh Morris

Chris Byars
Rhythm and Blues of the 20s

SteepleChase SCCD 31929 (CD)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Chris Byars (ts), John Mosca (tb), Zaid Nasser (as), Stefano Doglioni (bcl), Ari Roland (b) and Phil Stewart (d). Rec. date not stated

New Yorker Byars says this isn't old style R&B that he is offering here, rather it's a series of his distinctive originals which happen to use 'Rhythm' changes or which echo the blues. And by 'the 20s', he means the 2020s.

Consider the frontline formation too: alto, tenor, bass clarinet and trombone, Byars' clever writing sometimes suggesting a big band sax section, at others a light-touch *Birth of the Cool* feeling, albeit without a trumpet in sight.

'Salute to the Mailbox' is inspired by a Gigi Gryce number and proves to be a sunny piece, with Nasser sailing through in Bird fashion, preceding Byars' supple tenor and Mosca's tip-toe trombone before a lugubrious arco bass solo. Neil Tesser's useful note explains the harmonic niceties for each of Byars' tunes and highlights what he calls 'the concise, pithy solos'. These come into focus on the bluesy 'New Cards', Doglioni soloing with a casual ease that belies his instrument's more sombre character, the background writing moving well. 'Minor Miracle' moves the Rhythm changes from major to minor which may be new: Doglioni up first, Nassser again effusive, the backgrounds and thematic intricacies crisply handled, even if Mosca's high-note ruminations and the arco bass don't seem to offer much.

There's a different mood with 'Sincerely Yours', soft-voiced but perky, off-kilter says Tesser, and he's right. Much the same applies for all nine of Byars' imaginative themes; the only ringer is Freddie Redd's 'Farewell to Sweden', the album's closer, Byars cresting the wave ably. Intriguing, thoughtful music.

Peter Vacher

Alina Bzhezhinska & HipHarp Collective
Reflections

BBE BBE716ADG (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Alina Bzhezhinska (h), Jay Phelps (t), Tony Kofi (ts), Michele Montolli, Julie Walkington (db), Ying Xue (v, vla), Joel Prime (perc), Adam Teixeira (d), Vimala Rowe, Sanity and Tom theythem (v). Rec. 2021

On this, her much-anticipated sophomore album, Ukrainian born, London-based harp player and composer Alina Bzhezhinska forges ahead with a mission to re-imagine the harp in a jazz context and develop her own language in the process.

Emboldened by the acclaim that met 2017's *Inspiration*, a work in which she paid homage to Alice and (occasionally) John Coltrane, Bzhezhinska cherry picks from genres including trad jazz, spiritual jazz, trip hop and hip hop while bigging up Dorothy Ashby, that other *doyenne* of jazz harp. After setting out her stall with the Ashby-penned opener 'Soul Vibrations, invested with psychedelic funk, Bzhezhinska takes the harp on a journey that variously floats, soars, meanders and spirals and, with tunes such as Alice Coltrane and Joe Henderson's 'Fire' (in which Tony Kofi's sax and Jay Phelps's trumpet burn bright) blazes a sonic trail. Kofi is there, too, on

the ever affecting 'Alabama', which he and Bzhezhinska originally recorded to honour the Black Lives Matter movement, and joins Phelps and the vocalist Vimala Rowe on 'AfroBlue', a version that's up there with the best. Bzhezhinska's originals show off her compositional range: the spacious, Bill Evans/Jim Hall-inspired title track and the driving 'Paris Sur Le Toit', rapped over in French and English. 'Meditation', achingly pretty, closing the recording with an invitation to dream.

Jane Cornwell

Mark de Clive–Lowe

Mark de Clive-Lowe & Friends
Freedom: Celebrating The Music Of Pharoah Sanders

Soul Bank SBM005 (CD) ★★★

Mark De Clive-Lowe (p, el p, ky, effects), Teodross Avery (ts, ss), Dwight Trible (v), Corbin Carlos Ninos (perc), Corbin Jones (b) and Tommaso Cappellato (d). Rec. 2018

Promises, the great Pharoah Sanders' collaboration with Floating Points was a notable album of 2021, and a consolidation of the legend status of the former, a Trane disciple who has become a messiah in his own right over some five decades. This celebration of his songbook by New Zealand-born, London-developed and Los Angeles-based keyboardist-producer Mark De Clive-Lowe is a fitting rejoinder to the aforesaid record, a nod to Pharoah's stature as a composer as well as an 'energy player.'

Recorded live at the small but storied LA venue The Blue Whale, the music has the intensity for which the saxophonist is known, particularly on 'You Gotta Have Freedom' but more importantly it conveys the great serenity of his many sublime rhapsodic ballads, such as 'Astral Travelling' and 'The Creator Has A Master Plan.'

De Clive-Lowe leads very well on keys, infusing subtle mists of electronics into the ether while Teodross Avery, a 1990s saxophonist who's faded mysteriously from view, acquits himself impressively on the heady modal grooves. Having said that, vocalist Dwight Trible, who is to De Clive-Lowe what Leon Thomas was to Pharoah, takes the session to another level through the sterling, gospelised power of his tone and tightly controlled phrasing. It is serendipitous to hear him in this setting just as live recordings he made with LA independent jazz icon Horace Tapscott in the mid 1990s are being reissued. Histories aplenty are thus to the fore on this enjoyable session.

Kevin Le Gendre

Jeff Coffin
Between Dreaming and Joy

Ear Up Records EURO440 (CD, DL) ★★★

Jeff Coffin (bari s, ts, ss, as, electro-sax, tarogato, piccolo, af, bcl, C f, cl, melodica, v, perc, coke bottles), Vicente Archer, Tony Hall, Michael League, Stefan Lessard, Felix Pastorius, Alana Rocklin, Jonathan Wires, Chris Wood (b), Richard Aspinwall, Mike Baggetta, Robben Ford, Marcus King, Bob Lanzetti (g), Keith Carlock, Kris Myers, Jordan Perlson, Derrek Phillips, Chester Thompson, Derico Watson (d), Nigel Hall, David Rodgers, Buddy Strong, Chris Walters (keys), Emmanuel Echem, Bill Fanning (t), Ray Mason (tb), Bernardo Aguiar (Brazilian perc), Michael League (Moroccan frame drums), Sarah Ariche (v, ngoni), Jennifer Hartswick (add vocals) and DJ Logic (turntables). Rec. date not stated

Saxophonist Jeff Coffin – formerly of Bela Fleck & the Flecktones, now of the Dave Matthews Band – is a busy touring musician. Lockdown put paid to his road-going ways for a while, however, and gave him the space and time to write and record not just one but – by his own account – six or seven complete records. This one, *Between Dreaming and Joy*, features, if not quite a cast of thousands, then at least dozens of musicians, none of whom was ever in the same space when they recorded their parts – a very 2020–21 phenomenon. Alongside traditional instrumentation are sounds that are less familiar in the jazz context: super-funky opener 'Vinnie the Crow' has turntable work courtesy of DJ Logic, for instance, while the ethereal 'When Birds Sing' has vocals and ngoni work from Sarah Ariche, frame drums, doholla and much else from Michael League, and bungee chair bass from the leader himself. The standout cut for me is the stirring bluesy title track, which begins with music from an ice-cream van – what else? – before adding gargantuan slide guitar work from Marcus King. **Robert Shore**

Tommy Crane
We're All Improvisers Now

Whirlwind WWR-4785 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★

Tommy Crane (syn, sensory perc, perc, synth b, p, glockenspiel, sequencers, organelle, samples), Charlotte Greve (as, v), Logan Richardson (as), Jordan Brooks (el b), Pietro Amato (frhn), Simon Angell (g) and Chris Speed (cl). Rec. March 2020-January 2021

Drummer Tommy Crane moved to Montreal from a Sienna teaching sojourn days before lockdown. Creatively stocking up for the long hibernation to come, he rigged a spare room with synths and sensory, beat-transforming percussion, and hunkered down to make his solo debut.

Exploring wintry streets and relishing some prolonged time to think, Crane arrived at a maximalist ambient sound – grand like a Vangelis score, and layered in deep-pile synth luxury.

Mystifyingly for many of us who lived through it, the 1980s have replaced the 1960s as the decade yearned for by nostalgic youth, a decade experienced in economically depressed, oppressive grey remembered as a riot of optimistic colour. Blame it on *Stranger Things* or time's relentless generational grind, but crude synths abound in current music, arriving from a poignantly imperfect, analogue past.

The decade's capacity for futuristic nostalgia has actually been a constant, thin thread through this century's sounds, climaxing now. Crane makes it personal, accessing his late father's taste for 'yacht rock' on the even synth waves and padded bass of the thickly oceanic 'Before We Sail Away', and the elegiac 'In Memoriam'; 'Once I Was A Cohen' reflects on his grandparents' transformative voyage to America through a stately piano line's proud progress.

'Keys to the Darkroom' mines the prog-techno interface, hovering between 1980s Genesis and The Orb to reconstruct a euphoric rave dawn, while 'Nordique Americana' nods to ECM's cathedral ambience.

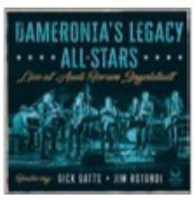
We're All Improvisers Now refers to Covid's dismantling of easy habits, and the need for jazz-like instincts to keep going. It's a memo from strange times: layered almost claustrophobically thick during lockdown's endless, empty hours, but with chords climbing towards a bright future.

Nick Hasted

Dameronia's Legacy All-Stars
Live at Audi Forum Ingolstadt

Ubuntu UBU0113 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Jim Rotondi (t), Johannes Herrlich (tb), Dick Oatts (as), Jon Boutellier (ts), Rik Van Den Bergh (bar s), Andrea Pozza (p), Aldo Zunino (b) and Bernd Reiter (d). Rec. 14 October 2021



Dameronia was a 1980s all-star group dedicated to the performance of music by Tadd Dameron, and led, initially, by drummer Philly Joe Jones. Austrian drummer Reiter organised this American-European ensemble as its latter-day equivalent for a two-week tour, this Ubuntu release taped before an appreciative German audience.

The presence of New York trumpeter Rotondi, now based in Austria, and Oatts, artist in residence at Amsterdam's Conservatory, doubtless gave impetus to the group's creation, adding a touch of star quality, although Reiter's fellow Europeans are no slouches either.

Adapted from the original arrangements penned by Dameron for the Gillespie and Eckstine orchestras, the charts are voiced as if for a mini-big band, the ensemble churn on each of the nine tracks prompting a round of solos, the rhythm section supporting well. In what is a standout performance, Van Den Bergh excels on the lovely 'If You See Me Now', his baritone sound akin to the late Cecil Payne, the final extemporisation rich and resonant. Elsewhere, all the frontliners have their moments but it's the Italian Pozza, who lived in London for a while, who consistently catches the ear, each of his solos like a brief burst of light. Reiter gets his lengthy way on 'Philly J.J.', the band breezing in at intervals, Rotondi spirited and the Dolphy-inclined Oatts and Herrlich each on song. It's good to be reminded just how well Dameron's tunes work when handled by an ensemble of this quality. The closer, 'Portrait' is a short Mingus piece, quite solemn, with Van Den Bergh again prominent. **Peter Vacher**

Camilla George

DOMi & JD Beck
NOT TIGHT

Blue Note B003590702 (LP/CD/DL) ★★★

DOMi Louna (ky, p, syn), JD Beck (d) with guests Thundercat (v, el b), Herbie Hancock (v, p), Kurt Rosenwinkel (g), Mac DeMarco, Anderson .Paak, Busta Rhymes and Snoop Dogg (v). Rec date not stated

As Gen-Z jazzers go, DOMi & JD Beck are leaders of a new hyper-hip yet virtuosic pack. French keyboardist DOMi Louna (aka Domitille Degalle, 22), and equally prodigious Dallas drummer JD Beck (aka James Dennis Beck, 19) have nearly 1.8 million followers across Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and Spotify and are no doubt exposing their massive young audience to a form of light-fingered jazz fusion alongside a 'grazing' diet of pop, rap and electronic music.

Their talent and these numbers are attracting some heavyweight guests too: who else could have Herbie Hancock, Kurt Rosenwinkel, Thundercat and three of the biggest names in rap, Snoop Dog, Busta Rhymes and Anderson .Paak (whose label is co-releasing this) on their debut album? And, of course, Blue Note has snapped them up as they seek to engage with a younger jazz audience too. So, what's all the fuss about? *NOT TIGHT* bristles with youthful energy but has a strange contemporary reserve that seems to be the hallmark of young players today: technique for days but not much feeling. If 'meme jazz' is a thing, then the album's earworm chord-melodies are typical examples.

'WHATUP' dances by like a 2022-take on 'Giant Steps' while 'SMILE' is two lopsided lo-fi looped sections decorated by Beck's beats and DOMi's undeniably catchy keys. Where the album scores musically is to fire up Thundercat on 'Bowling''s twisted vocal melody and to tear it up on some bass/keys fireworks on the album's complex electro-fusion title track. Herbie plugs in his vocoder for some chilled vox on 'Moon' (DOMi's Jaco-ish synth bass a nice retro touch), while guitar guru Kurt Rosenwinkel features on the album's deepest jazz cut, the aptly titled 'Whoa', shredding it up on yet more knotty Coltrane-style changes. Elsewhere, the rap and vocal contributions may lose older listener's interest and the very flat dynamics across the set (Beck's sound frequently emulates a drum machine), neuter this exciting duo's live energy and genuine chemistry.

The brainiac Gen-Z listeners will love it and maybe that's all that matters here. **Mike Flynn**

Dave Douglas Quintet
Songs of Ascent

Greenleaf GRE-CD-1096 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Dave Douglas (t), Jon Irabagon (s), Matt Mitchell (p), Linda May Han Oh (b) and Rudy Royston (d). Rec. date not stated

Curiously packaged in that the first part of the release, *Book 1: Degrees* is a universal release, while *Book 2: Steps* is only for Greenleaf music subscribers. This is meant to reflect Douglas' wish for his music to remain as 'independent' as possible from the music 'industry'. Either way, each release follows on last year's *Secular Psalms*, with Douglas going directly to Psalms 120-134 for inspiration.

This, of course, is Douglas' stellar quintet that's grown so intimate over their 11 years together. But what makes this recording different is that it was recorded remotely, a challenge for a band who thrive on their collaborative feel. And to be honest, there is a certain stiff-leggedness in the performances you don't readily associate with the band. But equally there is also a riot of improv. For example, 'Deceitful Tongues' may begin with an appropriately rising figure, but like Mae West's Snow White it soon drifts big time into a babel-fest of group improvisation.

Likewise 'Lift Up My Eyes' leaps up a scale like kids hurtling up a spiral staircase two steps at a time, only for Oh to go spectacularly in the other direction. And of course there are jewels of performances. Oh again is delicious on 'Sceptre', while Douglas is thoughtfully ecstatic on 'Enthroned' and by contrast soars for earthly heavens on 'Mouths Full of Joy'.

Perhaps there's a sense of being hemmed in by the overall concept, although the harum scarum 'A Fowler's Snare' finds Irabagon and Douglas frantically pursuing each other - who's the hunter? Who's the prey? - as it channels the anarchy this band plies so well. Given the context, another rich release from a group now reaching, as fits the subject matter, iconic status. But future releases will doubtless profit from them sharing time and space and earthly delights again. **Andy Robson**

Steve Gadd/Eddie Gomez/Ronnie Cuber/The WDR Big Band
Center Stage

Leopard WDR D77107 (CD) ★★★

Steve Gadd (d), Ronnie Cuber (bs), Eddie Gomez (b) and the WDR Big Band featuring Karolina Strassmayer (as), Bruno Muller (g), Bobby Sparks II (ky), Ludwig Nuss, Andy Hunter (tb), Simon Oslender (org) and Paul Heller (ts). Rec. 30 January–3 February 2022

As big band leader and rising star Olivia Murphy has lamented, the UK lacks standing bands like the Danish Radio Big Band, or as here, The WDR Big Band. What a treat it would be for the likes of Gadd or Gomez to record with a British radio band, under the baton of someone like Murphy or Iles.

This set is no game changer: it was never meant to be, but the presence of jazz royalty like the aforementioned and Ronnie Cuber's bluff baritone make this an enjoyable, bluesy, post bop run out with a funk edge as

per the opening Wonder-tune 'Signed, Sealed, Delivered'. And of course the WDR aren't only a passive platform for the imported 'talent': under Michael Abene's baton Bruno Muller gets to do his BB King thang on the good time shuffle of 'Watching the River Flow', and although Gomez goes for the limelight on 'Che Ore So' it's Ludwig Nuss's sweet trombone that steals the show. Gadd himself plays distinctly within himself but evidently enjoys the session.

Andy Robson

Camilla George
Ibio-Ibio

Ever Records CD-EVER-102 (CD, DL) ★★★

Camilla George (s), Daniel Casimir (b), Shirley Tetteh (g), Winston Clifford (d), Sheila Maurice-Grey (t), Rosie Turton (tb), Renato Paris (v), Sarah Tandy (p), Kadialy Kouyate (cora), Daru Jones (d) and Lady Sanity (v). Rec. date not stated

Born in Nigeria and of Afro-Caribbean heritage, Camilla George is in constant contact with all kinds of groove. *Ibio-Ibio* continues to celebrate her family's roots and the communities they are embedded in: 'Ekpe', for example, is dedicated to the secret society her grandfather was a member of, a council of elder statesmen called the Amama. Kadialy Kouyate's florid kora playing, plus titles like 'Abasi' (the Ibibio deity) and 'isang' (meaning journey) ground the music in a West African context, even if the resultant sound is more reflective of the celebrated London jazz sensibility, merging blues, hip-hop, and Afro-Caribbean soundworlds.

George will be familiar to readers as a long-time member of Jazz Jamaica, and as a key part of that London scene. A selection of her peer group features here, George forming a slick horn section with Sheila Maurice-Grey and Rosie Turton that's reminiscent of musical neighbours Kokoroko. George's bright and soulful playing is pleasing on the ear, and there's a starring role for Sarah Tandy, who contributes some far-reaching keys solos. The sound is reflective and groovy, the perfect place for Lady Sanity's jazzy flow (partnered with Pete Rock drummer Daru Jones). The Birmingham rapper is a great find, and one to watch.

Hugh Morris

John Escreet
Seismic Shift

Whirlwind Recordings (CD, 2 LP, DL)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

John Escreet (p), Eric Revis (b) and Damion Reid (d). Rec. January 2022

The pianist-composer John Escreet found himself in a room with just a piano for company during lockdown. Without any worldly distractions though, it provided the impetus for the 37-year-old Doncaster-born pianist-composer to get going on his first album in the acoustic piano trio format, having largely favoured both unplugged hybrids and an extended instrumental palette over his previous nine albums as leader – he went the whole hog, integrating strings on 2013's *Sabotage and Celebration*. Escreet's move to LA from New York, where he'd lived since moving from London in 2006, seemed to be a case of bad timing as it was just months before Covid struck. But Escreet, on the west as on the east coast, continues to engage with some of the hippest and highest quality contemporary-jazz musicians. Here the exploratory pianist is joined by the Branford Marsalis-aligned bassist Eric Revis and the innovative drummer Damion Reid, who's worked with other pianists Robert Glasper and more recently Tigran Hamasayan.

Escreet has a strikingly unique approach to jazz that's largely both highly percussive, dense harmonically and full of tension, and *Seismic Shift* is no exception; yet there's an eerie quality in his ambiguously-voiced spread chords compared to his more aggressively accented, sonic splashes and dense, spiky phrasing. Escreet's more soulful, free bop allegiances are here too, elements that were a highlight of 2018's excellent *Learn to Live*.

With his obvious technical prowess, Escreet makes the most of the entire sonic range of the grand piano. Although there are similarities with Cecil Taylor's stormy percussive style, Escreet is also drawn to more elusive composer-pianists such as Andrew Hill and Stanley Cowell. He assertively sets about Cowell's sublime 'Equipoise' theme (the only non-original) and it's emphatically delivered as you'd expect from Escreet. The pianist's original 'Perpetual Love' sounds like a sister piece to 'Equipoise' and has a compelling solo by Revis. It's challenging stuff, but *Seismic Shift* certainly deserves repeated listening. **Selwyn Harris**

Dai Fujikura/ Jan Bang
The Bowmaker

Punkt Editions/Jazzland Recordings 377 945 2 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Dai Fujikura (synth,), Jan Bang (samples and programming, synth, v) with Arve Henrikson (t, v), Nils Petter Molvaer (t), Eivind Aarset (el g, elec), Kati Raitinen (clo) and Tamami Tono (sho). Rec. date not stated

Fujikura and Bang create sound worlds at once enigmatic yet strangely certain. 'Nearly Invisible', so appropriately titled, could be an airy nothingness, yet it builds and shape shifts like a walk in a Redwood forest. All around appears the same, yet there's distinction in the details.

Paradoxically, although we are in a world created by the high tech of synths, samples and programming, this is attractively warm, humane, if melancholy, music, partly because of its intimate scale and partly because the colours and gentle melodies have an almost spoken, conversational tone about them.

There is darkness: the cello on the title track, the fragmentations of 'Flashing Images of Temple Spirits', with Petter Molvaer sublimely melancholy (Geoff Dyer could describe it oh, so better). But despite (because of?) the varied instrumentation and restless changes, coherence is maintained. Of course it helps that Bang and Fujikura have soul mates aboard: Petter Molvaer, who's long inhabited such climes of gossamer tracery, lends his buttery tones to 'Seven Inches of Rain', while Henrikson's muted trumpet on 'Country Life' is as if Miles' horn, long left locked away in its case, has of its own accord begun to play a ghostly music. The impossible made probable.

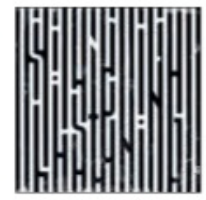
Andy Robson

Mark Guiliana
the sound of listening

Edition Records EDN-1210 (LP, CD, DL)

★★★★

Mark Guiliana (d, syn, prog, perc), Shai Maestro (p, mellotron, ampliceleste, el p), Jason Rigby (ts, bcl, cl, f) and Chris Morrissey (b). Rec. March 2022



New Jersey-born drummer Mark Guiliana releases his first quartet recording for five years on the high-profile, internationalist, UK-based Edition Records label.

Guiliana is developing a career as leader that's of a lighter, more upbeat mood than many of his contemporaries and he seems less interested in attempting to blur genre boundaries, than completely ignoring they exist.

No more so than on this new quartet release, *the sound of listening* [sic]. It has the high-quality production values demanded of contemporary electronica, adding a fresh clarity to the jazz quartet format sonicworld. Only the most pop-allergic type of jazz listener will turn their nose up at the seductive avant-pop that infuses some of the tunes here, including opener 'a path to bliss' that is reminiscent of his Mehliana duo partner Brad Mehldau's *Highway Rider* album in places.

On the other hand, second track 'The Most Important Question' highlights the whirling folky jazz sax of breathy tenorist Jason Rigby on a theme that resembles bebop in its snaky syncopated phraseology.

Guiliana's sharply inventive real-time contemporary beat-making is a sonic delight throughout. Shai Maestro, as with Guiliana, is an ex-sideman of Avishai Cohen's trio and also an excellent ECM recording artist, and he improvises with a sensuous verve.

The multi-layered shiny retro synthonic 'The Courage to Be Free' and 'The Sound of Listening' are more Aphex Twin than Nordic jazztronica while 'Everything Changed after you Left' swerves curiously from a Charles Lloyd-ish ballad theme to a kind of lounge jazz rumba while last track 'Continuation' shifts from buoyant African jazz to Avishai Cohen's middle-eastern jazz lyricism. For the most part it's an accessible, wonderfully tuneful, feel-good record, not common attributes in the work of his peers in the contemporary jazz world. Ironically then, t*he sound of listening* might not have broad appeal, so much as appeal more to the broad-minded.

Selwyn Harris

Jennifer Hartswick
Something in the Water

Brother Mister Productions BRO4002 (CD, LP, DL) ★★★★

Jennifer Hartswick (v, t) plus various personnel inc Nicholas Cassarino (g), Rob Marscher (ky), Christian McBride (b) and Conor Elmes (d). Rec. 26-28 May 2021

Released via Christian McBride's Mack Avenue Music Group imprint, Brother Mister Productions, and recorded at the legendary Sound Emporium Studios in Nashville, this exceptional nine-track album from the Nashville-based vocalist, trumpeter and composer Jennifer Hartswick came together when she and guitarist/producer Nick Cassarino secreted themselves away for a week and a half for an impromptu writing retreat in Vermont last winter.

With lyric input from songwriter Erin Boyd, from McBride's pulsating bass line which launches album opener 'Only Time Will Tell' to the hymnic beauty of the Dave Matthews/Mark Batson-penned 'When I'm Weary', which brings the album to a serene close, the ear-catching arrangements and captivating central performance from Hartswick ensure that each track crackles with emotion. The Cassarino-Boyd co-write 'Fairytale' is a perfect showcase for Hartswick's powerhouse vocal which blends mellifluously with the dynamic backing vocals provided by Cassarino and Celisse Henderson. Channelling a New Orleans-inspired shuffle groove, the entirely self-penned 'By the River' celebrates memories of childhood, with Hartswick clearly making good on the song's exhortation to "please never let the world extinguish that fire".

Accompanied solely by the fulsome tones of McBride's acoustic bass, a cover of Randy Newman's 'Guilty' allows Hartswick's vocal to take flight, while her remarkable range sees the melodic line disappear into the stratosphere on the marble smooth 'Enamored'. **Peter Quinn**

Julia Hülsmann Quartet
The Next Door

ECM 480 7370 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Julia Hülsmann (p), Uli Kempendorff (ts), Marc Muellbauer (b) and Heinrich Köbberling (d). Rec. March 2022

This is the second album by the Julia Hülsmann Quartet. Their first together, *Not Far From Here* from 2019, suggested Hülsmann had found the ideal vehicle not just to frame her piano and compositional talent, but that of Mullbauer, Köbberling and Kempendorf. In short, an ensemble in almost perfect balance, yet showing potential for artistic growth. Regular performances together has helped shape a group sound and identity that is greater than the sum of the individual performers. Hülsmann, wrote five of the 12 compositions – 11 originals plus 'Sometimes It Snows In April' by Prince – that demonstrate what a sophisticated composer she has become. Her compositions form the backbone of this album, while Mullbauer, Köbberling and Kempendorf (and Prince) contribute the balance.

Soloists emerge organically from the evolving nature of these compositions in a way that blurs the distinction between the written and improvised, while respecting the composer's intent by maintaining the mood and emotional climate of each song.

Uli Kempendorff has refined an approach to tenor saxophone that sounds closer to Atlantic period Lee Konitz than traditional exemplars of the instrument, his compelling inventions an important element in making this album the success it is.

Hülsmann's ingenious writing often links her left-hand lines to Muellbauer's bass, a subtle touch that tightens the sense of ensemble cohesion, while Muellbauer is totally in synch with Köbberling's subtle colouristic washes (there is thought, empathy and creativity in the way they jointly lift each composition); for example, 'Polychrome' has a series of neatly executed phrases that seem to progress in a series of sighs. This is music that pushes forward in sophisticated, subtle but always with creative ingenuity. **Stuart Nicholson**

Chris Hodgkins International Quartet
Festooned With Trumpets

Bell CD518 (CD) ★★★

Chris Hodgkins (t), Jinjoo Yoo (p), Wayne Wilkinson (g) and Alison Rayner (b). Rec. 20 May 2019

As previously reported, Hodgkins, once released from exigencies of administration, rekindled his desire to play with both his special tribute band devoted to Humph's memory [see *Jazzwise* 277] and this smaller affair, with which he also toured.

As ever, Chris ticked several boxes at once, with South Korean pianist Yoo alongside the UK's Rayner, and US guitarist Wilkinson as the front-line companion to Welsh-born Hodgkins. So yes, definitely a UN-approved assembly!

Unsurprisingly, the choice of material is similarly varied, not to say eclectic, with Yoo given 'Body and Soul' largely to herself, the impressive Rayner's strong lines equally noteworthy. Ms Yoo, now resident in New York, is a fascinating new find, content with a ballad or a mover and happy to collaborate with Wilkinson on Rayner's 'Two Hats and A Paper Bag', a jigsaw-like piece which just runs and runs. Otherwise, it's Hodgkins who we hear most, his tone and attack much in the Eldridge manner, with a variety of mutes to hand. He puts his Harmon mute to work on a deeply felt reading of 'Angel Eyes' before Wilkinson and Yoo give the guitarist's original 'Martino's Waltz' a cheery going -over. 'I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan' is stately, with Chris fronting, Yoo and then Wilkinson soloing with pleasing restraint. The final 'Flying Home', arranged by Wilkinson, is nicely voiced and swings too, Yoo enjoying the harmonic challenge, Hodgkins referencing Charlie Shavers. All very engaging stuff. **Peter Vacher**

Jon Irabagon
Rising Sun

Irabbagast Records 020 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Jon Irabagon (ts), Adam O'Farrill (t), Matt Mitchell (p, el p), Miles Okazaki (g), Chris Lightcap (b, el b) and Dan Weiss (d). Rec. 2022

Rising Sun heralds saxophonist/composer Jon Irabagon's flat-out return to collective music-making after the isolations of the pandemic – which the respected Filipino-American musician resourcefully explored on 2021's album *Bird with Streams*, a communing-with-nature lockdown adventure in which he blew variations on Charlie Parker classics against a live background of birdsong, babbling streams, and wind.

The core quartet of this set features fearsomely advanced Tim Berne piano original Matt Mitchell and the experienced bass/drums pairing of Chris Lightcap and Dan Weiss, while trumpeter Adam O'Farrill and guitarist Miles Okazaki also guest for two tracks each.

Irabagon and Mitchell coolly spin out warp-speed unison passages on the free-funky 'Alliance' and the dazzling post-Coltrane whirl 'Sundance' as if such gymnastics were effortless, and Lightcap and O'Farrill do the same as shadowy presences on the bleary and distantly Mingus-like 'Mammoth', but the exhilarating freshness of this music constantly makes these diversions sound integrated rather than pyrotechnical. Dizzy Gillespie's 'Bebop' unfurls at a hectic pace to stretch Irabagon and Mitchell into briefly scalding double-time variations, Okazaka's guitar brings a choppy eloquence (and Mitchell a contrastingly Cecil Tayloresque free-jazzy swirl) to the title track, while 'Needles' will spark haunting echoes of *In A Silent Way* for some.

After last year's necessarily ascetic *Bird with Streams*, *Rising Sun* represents Jon Irabagon at his most ingenious, generously collaborative, and accessibly contemporary. **John Fordham**

I Work In Communications
Kiss My Emoji Ring

tier.debut records TDR002 (DL, cassette) ★★★

George Crowley (ts, FX), Dave De Rose (d) and Marius Mathiszik (el g, el b, loops, syn, glockenspiel, edit). Rec. date not stated

Thanks to the pandemic, the notion of remote musical collaboration has become almost a commonplace, even for improvisatory musicians. Athens-based guitarist/producer Marius Mathiszik and London-living drummer Dave de Rose developed their I Work In Communications project in 2020 while ping-ponging tracks for another project. *Kiss My Emoji Ring* is their second album, this time with UK saxophonist George Crowley as collaborator, and the music has been created from layered single take improvisations initiated by Mathiszik on looped and processed guitar, responded to by de Rose's drumming and then given to Crowley to contribute as he felt appropriate before Mathiszik rounded off the final sound with bass, synths and electronica. As the band and album names suggest this is ultimately an exercise in musical fun for both player and listener whether the disrupted dub reggae pastiche of 'Take That Drone Off My Lawn' or the polyrhythmic spree of 'Mission To Find A Christmas Tree on Mars'.

The most satisfying track is the longest – 'Nebula' at around eight minutes has Crowley's warmly enticing sax rolling over crisp drumming, minimal bass pulse and ambient soundwashes. It evokes the gently evolving feel of a happy jam session that could/should have run on much longer, and indeed the principle criticism of *Kiss My Emoji Ring* would have to be its shortness at 32 minutes (though there is, apparently a bonus track on the cassette).

Tony Benjamin

Keith Jarrett
Bordeaux Concert

ECM 457 6607 (CD, DL) ★★★

Keith Jarrett (p). Rec. 6 July 2016

From the man who probably singlehandedly put the totally improvised solo piano recital on the map in the 1970s and 1980s, *Bordeaux Concert* is inevitably measured by the impossibly high standards of the artist's finest work in this genre.

Taken in that context, there are more puzzling allusions in this album than Ezra Pound's *Cantos* – it opens in edgy mood, the initial subject contrasted between inside (consonance) and outside (dissonance) variation, a point of reference that is abstracted, inverted, and extended until it becomes a signpost receding a fog of variations.

When a soliloquy-like coda emerges, it initially appears as a fresh canto, but emerges as an unrelated coda that marks the work's conclusion. Edginess persists, as fresh ideas are considered culminating in melodic reflection, a rhythmic episode and conclusion. Then edginess gives way to a rhythmic episode with a bump in time to the music (foot? pedal? soundboard being struck?) with open chords resolved by a down home, bluesy turnaround eagerly applauded by the audience.

Yet no conclusive mood emerges, fragmentary and episodic it results in an album without a satisfactory centre. Blue notes, in applause power, rate high, abstraction less so on the audience's Richter scale.

Stuart Nicholson

Jennifer Hartswick

Photo: Dani Barbieri

Sheila Jordan
Live At Mezzrow

Cellar Music 20 (CD, DL) ★★★

Sheila Jordan (v), Alan Broadbent (p) and Harvie S (b). Rec. 25 October 2021

trioTrio/Sheila Jordan
trioTrio Meets Sheila Jordan

SteepleChase SCCD31927 (CD) ★★★

Sheila Jordan (v), Jacob Sacks (p), David Ambrosio (b) and Vinnie Sperrazza (d). Rec. March 2021

You wait ages for a new record from the great Sheila Jordan, and along come two at once. Obviously, the anticipation has been heightened by the first-ever release last year of her debut promo recording done in 1960 (reviewed in *Jazzwise* 268), and she was already 31 by then. That she's in her 93rd year when creating these complementary albums provides an obvious explanation for an initial perception of her apparently diminished abilities – and comparison with the 15-years-junior Joni Mitchell's sudden re-appearance is irrelevant, since Sheila never had that kind of pure folksy sound in the first place.

What she did have, from early on, was a died-in-the-wool jazz phraseology whose tone clearly reflected her admiration of improvising instrumentalists, such as her hero Charlie Parker. Intonation was never her strongest point, so the occasionally wayward approach here is evidence of a lack of concern, rather than lack of energy.

There's only one overlap of material between these albums, the track called 'The Bird and Confirmation' (its first half a composed "improvisation" on 'Embraceable You') and, perhaps coincidentally, each album includes two purely instrumental items. The fact that the trioTrio members are less well-known than Broadbent and Harvie S doesn't imply any lack of quality.

The Steeplechase has standards as well as Kenny Dorham's 'Fair Weather' (famous for its use in *Round Midnight*) and another Jordan original, 'The Crossing', while the album done at the Mezzrow club has different standards plus Abbey Lincoln's 'Bird Alone'. The latter set inaugurates the Smalls' Live Living Masters series, and suffers a bit from the unforgiving spotlight of live performance but Jordan's undeniable presence and her occasional interactions with the audience turn this into a positive. The trioTrio collaboration, apparently done in a single studio day, seems more polished and marginally more careful, which may please some listeners better. **Brian Priestley**

Samara Joy
Linger Awhile

Verve Records 4826650 (CD, LP, DL)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Samara Joy McLendon (v), Pasquale Grasso (g), Ben Paterson (p), David Wong (b) and Kenny Washington (d). Rec. date not stated

Released last year on Whirlwind, Samara Joy McLendon's debut album announced the arrival of a remarkable new talent, a vocalist who possessed timing, timbral richness and emotional power in abundance.

On this follow-up album, released on the iconic Verve label, the winner of the 2019 Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition pays homage to one of her most important touchstones on opener 'Can't Get Out Of This Mood', which Vaughan recorded in 1950 with George Treadwell and his All Stars. Containing echoes of the version recorded by the great Carmen McRae on her 1957 album *After Glow*, 'Guess Who I Saw Today' is a standout. In addition to dusting down 'Social Call', written by Gigi Gryce with lyrics by vocalese legend Jon Hendricks, the singer presents two stunning additions to the genre in the shape of Fats Navarro's 'Nostalgia (The Day I Knew)' plus 'I'm Confessin' (That I Love You)', the latter based on Lester Young's solo from the album *Lester Young with the Oscar Peterson Trio* recorded in NYC exactly 70 years earlier in 1952. With outstanding support from guitarist Pasquale Grasso, pianist Ben Paterson, bassist David Wong and drummer Kenny Washington, the title track – first recorded almost 100 years ago in 1923 by Bailey's Lucky Seven – blazes like an exploding star. Augmented by horns (trumpeter Terell Stafford, trombonist Donavan Austin, tenorist Kendrick McCallister), there's a wondrous take on Monk's 'Round Midnight' (in the version with lyrics by Hendricks) while, accompanied solely by Grasso, the singer's incredibly beautiful timbre is heard to best effect in the Gershwins' 'Someone To Watch Over Me', which brings this staggeringly fine album to a close.

Peter Quinn

Helge Lien and Knut Hem
Villingsberg

Ozella OZ 100CD (CD, LP) ★★★

Helge Lien (p) and Knut Hem (dobro, weissenborn).
Rec. 5 April and 13-14 June 2016

Self-producing your own album can be a bit like being let loose in the chocolate factory. But once inside, which way to turn? The paradox of plenty kicks in – what to do? What direction to take? And with no producer to counsel, 'Do you really what to do this?' strange decisions can result.

Helge Lein is an exemplary pianist with the potential to be among the very best, but the experimental directions he has taken have created an image of someone casting around for 'new' directions. This is hardly unknown; Keith Jarrett's early career trajectory was one of pushing in several directions at once, culminating in *Expectations* (Columbia). Here, Lien teams with dobro/folkloric player Knut Hem (a dobro is an acoustic guitar with a metal resonator built into the body that shares several similarities with the lap steel guitar). Hem is accomplished, so is Lien, so what could possibly go wrong? Well, a clash of styles for a start. After the initial novelty of the first track or so, interest wears thin; this is probably one of those meetings which would be fun live, but committed to an album it needs a bit more gravitas, and so meaning. It's well played, of course, and exudes genial charm, but jazz audiences tend to be a bit more demanding than what is on offer here. **Stuart Nicholson**

Elan Mehler Trio
There Is A Dance

Newvelle Records NV031 (CD, LP, DL)

★★★★

Elan Mehler (p), Tony Scherr (b) and Francisco Mela (d). Rec. date not stated

Elan Mehler was discovered by Gilles Peterson in 2007 and went on to release three albums for Peterson's Brownswood imprint: here he is with a new addition to his spare but very well regarded discography, which has included collabs with Bill Frisell and Becca Stevens, on his own Newvelle imprint.

Comparisons have been made with Keith Jarrett, Brad Meldhau and Bill Evans, so expectations are high and fortunately Mehler doesn't disappoint. The title track, confusingly, doesn't imply dancing at all in its spacious, restrained, impressionistic near-rubato and in fact Mehler largely eschews steady time pulse in favour of the kind of rhythmic freedom that Jarrett favoured in his American Quartet, or, as in 'We Hope' with the subtlest of implied metre. Tony Scherr and Francisco Mela do a great job of reproducing the Charlie Haden/Paul Motian interplay - Scherr's bass is fat and resonant and Mela is restrained but creative, colouring in beautifully under Mehler's double-handed cascading runs on 'We Spin'. The sombre, minor key mood continues with 'Ruby' but "When You Were Blind' and 'East Side Blues' provide some uplift with a mellow, spacious gospel flavour, with a harmonic simplicity and folksy melody that again echoes Jarrett's idiosyncratic explorations of the idiom.

All the pieces are quite short, like tone-poem miniatures, exploring a single mood, usually calmly melancholic or nostalgic, though 'The Shakes' erupts into torrents of notes that approach a Cecil Taylor like intensity. Throughout, Mehler's wonderfully expressive touch and lyrical melodicism and the trio's empathy and sense of space compel the attention even in the quietest moments.

Despite the obvious Jarrett comparisons this record has a real personality: it creates its own atmosphere in a way that jazz records often don't. Maybe best enjoyed on the nicely-packaged vinyl issue. **Eddie Myer**

Andrew McCormack Trio
Terra Firma

Ubuntu UBU0123 (CD, DL) ★★★★

Andrew McCormack (p), Joe Downard (b) and Rod Youngs (d).
Rec. date not stated

Since his award-winning 2006 debut *Telescope*, Andrew McCormack's piano trio recordings have curiously been thin on the ground. The pianist–composer is recognised for his collaborations in duo with saxophonist Jason Yarde, the Kyle Eastwood band and writing commissions for the LSO among others. More recently in 2017 and 2019, a pair of his angular Tigran-influenced prog-jazz outfit Graviton's recordings signalled a surprising departure from the accessible, exquisitely lyrical brand of acoustic postbop jazz he's normally associated with. His last trio recording in 2014 was with a hard-driving New York collective but McCormack has a more commanding presence as both composer and improviser on the new album in a UK-based trio consisting of the young in-demand Joe Downard and his contemporary, the drummer Rod Youngs.

What's implicit in his love of 'classic' jazz mainstream pianists from Monk - whose 'Work' is one of four of the CD's elegantly reworked non-originals – and Herbie through to Jarrett and Mehldau is the instinct to adapt and reinvent the form. His skill-set as a classical music-influenced composer too – with 'New Music' composer Mark-Anthony Turnage as an important mentor - has fed into his improvisational approach on *Terra Firma* in terms of explorations of structuring and phrasing.

He starts with an earworm of a tune: 'Brooklyn Memoir' is one of the pianist's most direct and outgoing performances to date and ends with 'Prayer for Atonement' a lament that bears comparisons to Brad Mehldau in Radiohead mode. Sandwiched in between is a few non-originals including a perhaps predictable yet heartfelt and unpretentious account of Sting's 'Fragile'. 'Dear Old Stockholm' does the unexpected though, by sounding nothing like previous classic bop era takes, with McCormack effectively spinning it as an improvised classical-influenced piece mixing a contemporary drone element in with the folky lyricism of the late romantics. An optimistic vibe though is always just around the corner with McCormack and he swings with a playful lyricism on his 'Clementine Dream'. The programme is very well-balanced and there's a new confidence and self-awareness about McCormack on this one that makes it one of his best album recordings so far.

Selwyn Harris

Olivia Murphy
Moonrise

Lyte Records (DL) ★★★

Olivia Murphy (cl), Olly Chalk (p) and Becca Wilkins (v). Rec. January 2022

For those who only know Murphy from the big-souled sweep of her orchestra (watch out for the EP coming soon!), or for her arrangements of Amy Winehouse material for the not long finished NYJO tour, you are in for a treat.

It's kind of fitting that *Moonrise* is an EP, because it's a microcosmic world compared to other Murphy projects. But like an Elizabethan miniature or a Faberge egg, *Moonrise* may be small but it's rich in detail.

Favouring clarinet over the sax Murphy studied at the Birmingham Conservatoire, the five songs drift dream like (but not aimlessly) through the curious world where we are half awake, half asleep. It's a state of consciousness Brigitte Beraha sometimes explores, and indeed Murphy's long time collaborator Wilkins has something of Beraha's other worldliness. Chalk likewise stays suggestive rather than somnambulant as the trio weave their web. Perhaps only a peek through the window at Murphy's talents, but one that leads you to wish for more.

Andy Robson

Olivia Murphy

David Murray Brad Jones Hamid Drake
Seriana Promethea

Intakt CD381 (CD) ★★★★

David Murray (ts, bcl), Brad Jones (b) and Hamid Drake (d). Rec. 2021

David Murray may have one of the greatest discographies in the recent history of black music, yet he continues to rise to the challenge of adding to it. And finding something new to say in the process. How can the contemporary saxophone colossus be more than a colossus of the saxophone? By writing his own tunes for a start. He has produced original material since his debut in the mid 1970s and this trio set underlines his ability as a composer, a quality possibly overshadowed by his monumental gifts as a soloist.

Ear-catching melodic lines, sometimes short, sharp motifs cast against rhythms borne of blues, swing and funk that avoid the clichés of those genres, are really the order of the day here.

In double bassist Brad Jones and drummer Hamid Drake Murray has two bandmembers who are supple, powerful and able to convincingly take the reins when called to do so. But Murray remains a compelling leader and the richness of his timbre, the piercing quality of his upper range on the tenor as well as the delicious rumble of his bass clarinet consolidate his living legend status. At the age of 67 he doesn't look set to slow down any time soon. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Jason Palmer
Con Alma

SteepleChase SCCD31930 (CD) ★★★

Jason Palmer (t), Leo Genevese (p, frhn), Joe Martin (b) and Kendrick Scott (d). Rec. 2017 and 2021

Jason Palmer's spiky tone and long angular lines are rooted in the lyrical, harmonically sophisticated trumpet tradition of Booker Little.

Original compositions reveal left-field inclinations and sideman credits with the likes of Herbie Hancock, Common and Mark Turner confirm the quality of his work.

Con Alma puts his tonal control and melodic flow under the spotlight of a trumpet-and-rhythm quartet. Tempos range from slow to the middle range, drummer Kendrick Scott and Joe Martin on bass support sensitively, and pianist Leo Genovese adds supple piano voicings and firecracker wit.

Nine tracks here were originally released for the vinyl-only subscription label Newvelle in 2018 under the title *Fair Weather*, and it is these which stand out. 'Moonlight becomes You' and 'Old Folks', two standards from the Booker Little archive, reveal Palmer's impressive technique; the first comes with figured bass, the second gains a mambo trace and Palmer spins fresh lines on both.

Later, trumpet and piano swap the melody of Wayne Shorter's 'Nefertiti' at will, 'Easy Living' is soulful and three Palmer originals are well-conceived.

'Con Alma', the title track, and two self-penned songs were recorded remotely in 2021, taking the original album up to CD length. Palmer's road-tested originals deserve to be heard and drummer Scott plays a treat. But Genovese switches to Fender Rhodes and his voicings and touch are too heavy for the music to fly. **Mike Hobart**

Noah Preminger & Max Light
Songs We Love

SteepleChase SCCD 31928 (CD)

★★★★

Noah Preminger (ts) and Max Light (g). Rec. May 2021

The songs that saxophonist Noah Preminger and guitarist Max Light like range from Joni Mitchell's 'Marcie' to what they heard on the radio when they were growing up. Hence 'Call and Answer' by the Barenaked Ladies, David Matthews' 'Satellite' and 'Kiss Me' by Sixpence None the Richer ("it was hot on the radio for six months when I was aged 13", writes guitarist Light on the sleeve).

But whatever the origin, the duo mould each tune to fit this intimate, intensely musical and impressively varied set. Preminger, now 36 with 16 releases and a *DownBeat* rising star award on his CV, is rightly praised for his tonal subtleties, melodic clarity and sharp-suited attack. Guitarist Light, a new kid on the block, adds fluency, warmth and harmonic sophistication making the album an unexpected treat.

'Satellite' is the opener and much is made of that underlying riff and 'Call and Answer' brings the album to a solemn close. In between, melodies are played sweetly, Paul Simon's 'Still Crazy After All These Years' is rendered as a ballad for solo guitar and sax ruminates thoughtfully on Leonard Cohen's 'Hallelujah'.

Four originals round out the set. Preminger's 'Bird', developed out of Charlie Parker's 'Segment' and Light's 'Things', based on Kern and Hammerstein's 'All the Things You Are' delivers thrilling intricate unison lines. 'Len', a ballad, is moving, but it is the unaccompanied sax of 'Meditation for NW' which really pulls the heartstrings.

Mike Hobart

Enrico Rava/ Fred Hersch
The Song Is You
ECM 2746 (CD, DL) ★★★★

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Enrico Rava (t) and Fred Hersch (p). Rec. November 2021

Enrico Rava has a particular affinity for working in duo with pianists, his notable previous collaborators including Stefano Bollani and Enrico Pieranunzi. In 2021 he played some concerts with Fred Hersch and the result is another fine partnership which led to more concerts earlier this year, with a further crop due in Europe during the late autumn.

However, their 2021 collaboration was captured for posterity by ECM, and the album they have created plays brilliantly to the strengths of both musicians. The opening 'Retrato Em Banca E Preto' takes the Jobim composition and probes at it sensitively and co-operatively, so that Rava's stabbing phrases are countered by Hersch's sense of texture, and then a solo piano passage acts as a springboard for further joint exploration.

The mood carries through into a lengthy free improvisation, but also into the way they approach a pair of their own compositions, and a handful of standards. A fragmented opening to 'I'm Getting Sentimental Over You' (at quite a lively pace) opens into a fuller examination of the song, with Rava's innate lyricism contrasting with his occasional – sometimes almost random - flurries of notes, and it is this blend of the unexpected and the lyrical that makes the album work so well.

Hersch has long been an exponent of Thelonious Monk's music and the high point here is their joint reading of 'Misterioso', its *perpetuum mobile* followed by a masterly piano solo version of 'Round Midnight' that eschews the traditional opening for one of Hersch's inimitable introductions, followed by a meditation that is the aural equivalent of a shimmering chandelier in the half-light of a darkened room. **Alyn Shipton**

Joshua Redman Quartet
Long Gone
Nonesuch 0075597910032 (CD, LP, DL)

★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Joshua Redman (ts, ss), Brad Mehldau (p), Christian McBride (b) and Brian Blade (d). Rec. date not stated

This November's EFG London Jazz Festival reunion of saxophone star Joshua Redman's quartet featuring three of the classiest sidekicks in classic-to-contemporary jazz was unsurprisingly sold out at the Barbican by August.

Anyone with half an ear tuned to how those four virtuosi have played – separately, and fleetingly together – since they became a band in 1994, will know why. *Long Gone* is the latest chapter in their very occasional story, this time with all six tracks being composed by Redman himself. The tunes present an intriguing (even perplexing) contrast - being a selection of five elegant pieces mostly sprung off classic standard-song designs, plus one closing, hookily cryptic 12-minute take from a live show that reveals the power they unleash when the tunes barely matter and the gloves are off. The opening title track is a warmly languid glide on a rapturous classic-tenor, tweaked by the odd standard-song quote; the darting soprano feature 'Disco Ears' sets Redman and Mehldau off on glittering fast improvisations. The tenor rapture 'Statuesque' beautifully buoys up the quiver of Redman's long tones, and 'Ship to Shore', a slyly rocking slow groove, is developed in bluesy twists and asides by all the band.

But it's the closing 12-minute live take, 'Rejoice', that steals the show in its cryptically telling tenor blurts, hustling Mehldau-shadowed countermelodies, one-touch call-and-response and hurtling time-playing. As if all four were tuned into Sonny Rollins' mindset in his prime, it almost feels like the tunes are incidentals to this one-off band's dynamism.

John Fordham

Blade, McBride, Redman and Mehldau

Wadada Leo Smith
Emerald Duets
TUM TumBox 006 (5 CD) ★★★★

Wadada Leo Smith (t, p) Pheeroan akLaff, Andrew Cyrille, Han Bennink and Jack DeJohnette (d). Rec. 2019-20

A prolific output in the last decade has seen Smith explore many musical settings but the trumpeter's imagination knows no bounds.

This 5-CD box set pairs him with five drummers of different generations, cultures and above all personalities, the net result being a kind of tribute to the instrument in question as well as a vehicle for Smith's compositional verve. Proceedings start with Pheeroan akLaff, who at the age of 67 is the youngest player on the project. Yet his relationship with Smith is long standing, as their collaborations reach back to the late 1970s and the deep empathy between the two men is apparent on 'Litanies, Prayers And Meditations', which often sees Smith bring a gentle force to bear on the music when he switches to piano after creating heraldic brass themes elsewhere.

In contrast, there is a curious blend of explosion and introspection on 'Havana Cuba', which pairs Smith with his peer Andrew Cyrille, whose wonderfully liquid rhythms and crisp timbres are as striking now as they were in the 1960s, while 'Mysterious Sonic Fields', the Han Bennink collaboration, moves smartly between free meter and fierce groove, as one might expect given the Dutchman's proven taste for adventure. Finally, there are two sessions with Jack DeJohnette ('Freedom Summer', 'The Legacy and Paradise:The Gardens And Fountains') which are fascinating for the level of profound communication between the two men, both of whom play piano at various junctures.

Indeed, the combination of Smith on acoustic and DeJohnette on Fender Rhodes is engrossing for a textural range that both glows and glistens among uncommon chordal arcs. This wealth of music may be what Smith's audience has become accustomed to at this advanced and consistently fruitful stage of his career, but as much as his approach to both composition and improvisation is distinctively personal he keeps finding invaluable pockets of originality when he commits new material to memory. Beyond the musical accomplishment of *Emerald Duets,* its coherent balance of beauty and austerity, there is an unbroken line of recognition of many important players, be it the legendary South Africans Mongezi Feza and Johnny Dyani or Americans Jeanne Lee and Ornette Coleman, and a stark denunciation of the alarming nadirs of 21st century Stateside politics. As the FBI retrieves what Donald Trump casually took from the White House, it is timely to think about what George W Bush gave the nation years before.

For those who are not in the know Smith calls it out loud and clear: 'The Patriot Act, Unconstitutional and a force that destroys democracy.' **Kevin Le Gendre**

Tyshawn Sorey Trio
Mesmerism
www.tyshawnsorey.com (CD, DL) ★★★★

Tyshawn Sorey (d), Aaron Diehl (p) and Matt Brewer (b). Rec. date not stated

Known for his work with American prime movers Vijay Iyer and Steve Lehman as well as his own bands, drummer Tyshawn Sorey has in the past decade established himself as a boldly original player and composer. He certainly pushed the envelope on conceptual works such as 2009's *Koan*, which was full of spacious soundscapes and beguiling harmony. *Mesmerism*, a set of covers, stands as an important statement insofar as it shows Sorey's affinity to the straightahead as well as avant-garde schools of thought. Which means stealthy movement from Horace Silver and Paul Motian to Duke Ellington via Muhal Richard Abrams. Sorey makes several points in the process. His ability to balance sturdy rhythmic drive and

sensitive understatement is flawless; his swing forceful yet not bombastic; his handling of the yearning romanticism of 'Autumn Leaves', a standard that can turn to slush if not treated with a degree of imagination, underlines his listening as well as playing skills.

Pianist Aaron Diehl and double bassist Matt Brewer are very suitable partners in any case, and the artful blend of blues and classical leanings of the former and tonal richness of the latter are particularly effective on the downtempo numbers when Sorey's use of brushes or hands draws a kind of whisper and purr from the snare drum, making it conspicuously sensual. This is an emotionally charged and musically articulate CD that sees Sorey defy expectation and straddle many traditions rather any single one.

Logically, the set was produced by the legendary drummer-educator Michael Carvin.

Kevin Le Gendre

Spinningwork
Spinningwork

New Jazz and Improvised Music
NEWJAiM12 (CD, DL) ★★★

Tom Ward (as), Cath Roberts (bar s), Olie Brice (b) and Johnny Hunter (d). Rec. 2021

To quote Hannibal from the *A-Team*, "I love it when a plan comes together." All this music was composed during Covid lockdown, with the musicians interacting remotely using an online tool. Fast forward to last year's Newcastle Festival of Jazz and Improvised Music, and the pieces were performed in a shared physical space for the first time, as captured here.

Maybe it's post-rationalising, but there certainly seems to be an element of tentative caution at the beginning of this session, with each instrumentalist sounding out the sonic terrain, checking for footholds and taking their time before making a move. But, once assured, it really starts to burn, with Johnny Hunter's boiling and fizzing drums leading the way into a satisfying free-jazz simmer.

With two members of Sloth Racket on-board – Hunter plus baritone saxophonist and principle 'Racket composer, Cath Roberts – it's perhaps unsurprising that echoes of that band's approach can be heard: delicate constructions that often coalesce around stomping riffs. But, with four of the UK's most imaginative and questing improvisers at the controls, there's never a sense of predictability. It's exciting and spontaneous from start to finish.

Daniel Spicer

Art Themen/Dave Barry Quartet
Hanky Panky

Trio tr606 (CD) ★★★★

Art Themen (ts, ss), Dave Barry (d), Gareth Williams (p) and Dave Green (b). Rec. 23 April 2019

Barry says a session was cancelled so instead he corralled Themen, Williams and Green, all of whom were available at short notice. And thank heaven, for this is a very classy affair indeed. 'The Night Has A Thousand Eyes' opens as a free-flowing tenor exposé, Themen shuffling his ideas as only he can, Barry laying down a tidal wave of drum effects. Williams, as ever, is not to be outdone, his improvisations like a cascade of unexpected twists and turns, Themen back in to finish.

Dexter Gordon's title track with its parade ground strut is immediately engaging, Green's purposeful walk allowing Williams to fly, occasional funky figures punctuating the flow, before Themen casts his spell, sinuous and mystical, with Rollins like an unseen guest, Green and Barry playing games.

'Black Narcissus' is a soprano feature, the tone a tad peevish, Williams thoughtful and pertinent, a mood that continues with 'Prelude To A Kiss', Themen back on tenor, almost reverential as he explores its time-honoured outline, Williams markedly un-Duke-like, as Green takes over. Themen's final solo is of the highest quality; Paul Gonsalves would have approved, I'm sure. Monk's 'I Mean You' is a stompier affair and all the more welcome for it. 'Without A Song' has Williams in imperious form, Themen tip-toeing around the melody, Green powerful in solo and support, Williams taking the chordal route home. Rollins' 'Solid' is the toe-tapping closer to an impromptu four-star collaboration but its five-stars to label boss Andy Cleyndert for his production, design and photography. A shiny digipack to savour: good to look at and great to play. **Peter Vacher**

Album Interview

Michael Wollny Trio
Ghosts

ACT Music ACT9956 (CD, DL) ★★★★ EDITOR'S CHOICE

Michael Wollny (p), Tim Lefebvre (b) and Eric Schaefer (d). Rec. 17–18 June 2022

A very confident and assured showing by Michael Wollny's Trio who present a concept album linked to the theme of 'ghosts'. For Wollny, songs are like ghosts, and over a period of months he has assembled a selection of music that regularly haunts him – from Franz Schubert's 'Erlkönig' to jazz standards, film music such as 'Willow's Song' from *The Wicker Man*, songs by Nick Cave and Timber Timbre to the spirits that inhabit the Irish folk song 'She Moved Through the Fair.' Yet this is far from doom-laden, navel-gazing stuff. Yes, several minor key compositions, and the album title track is indeed haunting and atmospheric. But numbers like 'She Moved Through the Fair' moves to the major and the sunlight while the use of electronics on a composition such as 'Hand of God' is tasteful and reminds us this is the 21st century and not a piano trio from the 1960s.

Jazzwise spoke to Michael Wollny:

All songs enjoy a second life in memory, so is that what you mean by ghosts, an image of song that lurks, in the recesses of memory, which may not even be complete, or half remembered?

Some pieces of music have this indescribable, haunting quality - pieces that come back to us, that long for an existence in the present. Very much like a ghost! I spent some time as an artist in residence at the university in Lausanne. One of the things I learnt was that all forms of musical composing and improvising essentially mean restructuring musical memories. So ghosts are all around us when we play music.

It is interesting that the role of Tim Lefebvre appears more firmly consolidated within the overall trio concept, how did this influence the direction of the current trio – and its repertoire?

Tim is an incredibly versatile musician, and still he has this unique and instantly recognisable voice no matter what style or genre. Playing with Tim makes you feel like there are literally no wrong steps, no matter which direction the music goes, he will always find the right beat and pitch to perfectly support you. Also, he has contributed many ideas concerning instrumentation and arrangement of the songs. For us it was very important to do an album of songs, thinking about which ingredients to use in which track to build this ghostly atmosphere.

Many songs on *Ghosts* are deconstructions, does this imply the fragility of memory that produces a ghostly image of a song, or is it an entry point to explore the song's melody and harmonies?

I'd say it's both – and as such the exact theme of the album in a broader sense – sometimes a part of the whole, a surreal apparition can convey much more truth, essence and meaning than a correct replication of the original. Of course it's important to know a song inside out, but I find it much more interesting to use this knowledge to focus on certain hidden aspects than playing "the right thing". When we play 'I Loves You Porgy' [the opening track on *Ghosts*] I remember both the original Gershwin composition as well as Nina Simone's live version from 1962, with a very youthful energy thriving through the music. It's a lovely recipe of three minds, I enjoyed making it so much.

Stuart Nicholson

Miguel Zenón Quartet
Música de Las Américas
Miel Music 19526917698 (CD) ★★★★

Miguel Zenón (as), Luis Perdomo (p), Hans Glawischnig (b), Henry Cole (d), Paoli Mejías (perc), Daniel Díaz (cga) and Victor Emmanuelli (barril de bomba).
Rec. March 2022

Raised in Puerto Rico, schooled in jazz at Berklee, and mentored in his youth by influences as powerful as Danilo Pérez and Branford Marsalis, alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón blossomed two decades ago as a tonally subtle postboppish virtuoso with a broad cultural vision. *Música de Las Américas* is his most ambitious example of those interests yet, with a percussion-expanded version of his long-running quartet visiting the 15th century Caribbean cultures of the Tainos and Caribe populations, the Haitian Revolution and vodou rituals, Aztec ceremonies, contemporary grooves and more.

Considering the breadth of reading and study Zenón has put into this venture, it's a triumph that this set sounds so vivaciously light and free-spirited. 'Tainos y Caribe' skims and swerves over wildly asymmetrical stretching of bop swing, (spotlighting the mercurial inventiveness both of the leader and long-time Zenón pianist Luis Perdomo), contrasting with subtle meditations like the sensuously conga-floated 'Navegando' or the brooding 'Venas Abiertas'. 'Opresion y Revolucion' jaggedly zigzags over 21st century genre-bridging rhythms and clangy piano vamps, the percussion-led 'Bambula' turns into ducking-and-diving postbop, and the buoyant finale 'Antillano' cannily catches the contemporary two-way stretch between the popular music of Africa and the modern Americas.

Música de Las Américas represents as broad a soundscape as its title, but Miguel Zenón's incandescent alto always leads the illumination of it.

John Fordham

Various Artists
Here It Is: A tribute to Leonard Cohen
Blue Note 4565996 (CD, 2 LP, DL) ★★★★

Norah Jones (p, v), Peter Gabriel, Gregory Porter, Sarah McLachlan, Immanuel Wilkins, Lusiana Souza, James Taylor, Iggy Pop, Mavis Staples David Gray, Nathaniel Rateliff (v), Bill Frisell (g), Greg Leisz (pedal steel g), Immanuel Wilkins (sax, v), Kevin Hays (p), (Larry Goldings (org), Scott Colley (b) and Nate Smith (d). Rec. 2022

Artists have been covering the songs of Leonard Cohen since at least 1969, when Roberta Flack included 'Hey, That's No Way To Say Goodbye' on her memorable debut album *First Take*, showing it was possible to produce a version of a Cohen song that was superior to the original, sacrilegious though the thought may have been to Cohen fans.

Subsequently, cover versions of Cohen's songs by others have even played a role in resurrecting his career at certain points in his life. So while the notion of Cohen covers is hardly new, an album with 11 vocalists covering his work is, and when the producer is Larry Klein – a former friend and fan of Cohen – who delivered Herbie Hancock a Grammy in 2007 for *River: The Joni Letters*, expectation rises. Klein was untroubled that Cohen's songs come weighed down with subjectivity, instead looking for each singer to put their own imprimatur on the material. With a strong backing band, and a well chosen selection of Cohen songs from the lesser known to favourites like 'Suzanne,' 'Hallelujah,' 'Famous Blue Raincoat' and 'Hey, That's No Way to Say Goodbye' he gets fine performances from all his vocal guests. There's even some standout work by likes of Norah Jones, who Norah Jones-ifies 'Steer Your Way' – no mean feat with such strong material – Gregory Porter, Sara McLachlan, James Taylor and Mavis Staples, while Bill Frisell features on 'Bird on The Wire.' Not difficult to imagine a Grammy nomination, at the very least, going Klein's way.

Stuart Nicholson

CD Shortcuts: New Releases

Nicki Adams & Michael Eaton
Paraphrase
SteepleChase ★★★

A bop-centred selection of originals and tunes by Monk, Shorter and Coltrane given a virtuosic treatment by a young NYC-based sax-piano duo; it's occasionally reminiscent of Lee Konitz's duo work with pianist Nicki Adam's effervescently imaginative input while maintaining a rock solid timekeeping role particularly standing out.

Wolfert Brederode
Ruins and Remains
ECM ★★★

A Dutch pianist, who has worked with vocalist Susanne Abbuehl among others, makes his debut for the mighty Munich label in duo with percussionist Joost Lijbaart and Matangi String quartet and it's classic ECM improvised chamber-jazz with its patient development and spacey, minimalistic, meditative ambience.

Dee Byrne
Live At Cafe OTO
Luminous Label ★★★

London-based collective Lume is a platform for original composition and spontaneous invention, and here its co-leader, the avant-jazz saxophonist Dee Byrne goes for the latter in a cohesive 27-minute solo on alto, patiently working out strong ideas on the go, while adding sax-sampled loops and some understated sonic palette extensions.

David Dorůžka / Piotr Wyleżol / Jeff Ballard
Andromeda's Mystery
Supraphon ★★★

The transatlantic collective of Czech guitarist Dorůžka, Polish keyboardist Wyleżol and the formidable US drummer Jeff Ballard's debut album as titled has a mysterious edge to it crossing a kind of trippy electric jazz with some thoughtful post-bop.

Yoko Fujiyama-Graham Haynes-Ikue Mori
Quiet Passion
Intakt Records ★★★

A New York-based Japanese pianist, initially inspired by Cecil Taylor, explores the more gentle, spacey, abstract yet vigorous aspects of free-improv in hauntingly atmospheric dialogue with electronica artist Ikue Mori and cornetist Graham Haynes.

Grant Green Jr
Thank-you Mr Bacharach
ZMI Records ★★★

This son of a legendary guitarist, who has been likened to George Benson, showcases his unfussy arrangements of some of Burt Bacharach's hits and a band that plays smooth, slinky or funky without plunging into out-and-out schmaltz.

Joy Lapps
Girl in the Yard
Self-release ★★

While it's unusual to hear a steelpan being played in a jazz setting, the Toronto-born steel drummer Joy Lapps - who draws from her Caribbean heritage as well as Brazilian and jazz influences - plays a mainstream brand of fusion that's unremarkably middle-of-the-road on her fifth album release to date.

Lisbeth Quartett
Release
Intakt Records ★★★

Saxophonist-composer Charlotte Greve is a recent German Jazz Prize winner, and her airy high-register tone and dance-y chamber-melody phrasing are engaging as she fronts an acoustic quartet in the mainstream reflective Euro-jazz tradition.

Rich Meehan Trio
Suite Antique
Self-release ★

Unsurprisingly this 'Dinner Jazz Favourite' hasn't got much to do with jazz at all; instead pianist Meehan and his trio offer a chamber piano trio mix of what sounds like watered-down Enaudi and singer-songwriter keyboard backing, while adding a few tokenistic synth-y effects along the way.

Mountain Coast
Phases
Shifting Paradigm Records ★★

The Denver-based Mountain Coast's second album featuring Brian Blade's Fellowship band member and co-leader Dave Devine on guitar, could be a soundtrack to a film about astronauts floating in space but there's some understated creativity in its illustration of a slow-mo, spaced-out murkily ambient soundscape.

Tumi Mogorosi – Group Theory
Black Music (New Soil)
Mushroom Hour ★★★

Shabaka and the Ancestors' South African drummer Mogorosi's hyper-busy hustling polyrhythms and fills are quite something but a little overbearing in this quintet format; nevertheless it's an invigorating jazz-Township mix of coolly arranged horn themes and a choir of celestial operatic voices reminiscent of Kamasi Washington's *The Epic* with its otherworldly qualities.

Stellar Legions
Stellar Legions
Sdban Ultra ★★

The Antwerp-based electronica artist Andrew Claes makes a sonic mood music that's a mixed bag, featuring a 'live' band inspired by 'cosmic' jazz, groovy freeness and Miles' early electric periods, as well as elements of funk, dub and reggae.

Selwyn Harris

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Albums: Reissues/Archive

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Andy Bey
Experience And Judgment

Atlantic/Real Gone Music RGM 1403 (LP, DL) ★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Any Bey (v, p) George Davis, Richard Resnicoff (el g), Slewart Clark (vn), Bill Fischer (ky), Wilbur Bascomb (el b), Ira 'Buddy' Williams and Jimmy Young (d). Rec. 1974

A recent reissue (reviewed on p50) of Max Roach's 1968 masterpiece *Members, Don't Git Weary* provided a welcome opportunity to hear the heavenly voice of Andy Bey, who sang the title track so beautifully. This solo debut by Bey, released six years after, has long been a much sought-after collector's item and for very good reason.

It remains the record that emphatically supports any claim for him to be ranked alongside the likes of Jon Hendricks, Johnny Hartman and Al Jarreau, even though he had a much lower profile. Although his performance is compelling, with his carefully controlled vibrato and long held notes possessing a kind of dignity as well as power, Bey really comes into his own as a writer. Songs such as 'Tune Up', 'Hibiscus' and above all 'Celestial Blues', a stellar anthem he also recorded with Gary Bartz, confirm that he has an absolute gift for fraught, floating melodies that were potently served by simmering pysched-out funk supplied by a crack band anchored by bassist Wilbur Bascomb, drummer Buddy Williams and keys player Bill Fischer. Bey implores us to "be free of all the things we don't need", but this album should be required listening. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Michael Brecker Band & Randy Brecker Band
Live at Fabrik

Jazzline Classics D 77102 (2 CD, 3 LP) ★★★

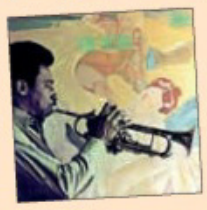
Michael Brecker Band: Brecker (ts, EWI), Joey Calderazzo (p), Mike Stern (g), Jeff Andrews (b) and Adam Nussbaum (d); Randy Brecker Band: Brecker (t), Bob Berg (ts) David Kikoski (p), Dieter Ilg (b) and Joey Baron (d). Rec. 18 October 1987

The Michael Brecker Band extensively toured in the late 1980s and 90s, and was widely expected to feature on Brecker's major label debut as a leader in 1987. In the event they did not feature on *Michael Brecker*, or on commercial recordings at all (probably the band's best-known representation of this line-up is on the allegedly 'unoffical' recordings of *The Michael Brecker Band Live 1989*, on Jazz Door).

This official Jazzline release presents well-recorded radio broadcasts of both the Brecker brothers with their respective bands, at the Fabrik, an excellent music venue in Hamburg. With both sessions recorded on the same night for NDR radio, it promises much. But in the end, it flatters to deceive.

The Michael Brecker Band occupy the first CD of this double set and open with 'Nothing Personal,' clocking-in at 21-plus minutes. Brecker opens with a long tenor solo that is, in effect, an exposition of his technique and mastery of the interval of a fourth (signalled early on by signifying on 'Freedom Jazz Dance'). It is a curiously unmoving pattern-based display of technique for technique's sake. 'Fragment' sees Brecker move to EWI, signifying on 'Jean Pierre' (taken from Miles Davis' *We Want Miles*) with a harmon muted trumpet sample to the delight of the crowd and the despair of those who have heard it quoted far too often. 'Upside Downside' begins with EWI simulated turntable scratching that launch both Brecker and Stern into widdly-widdly mode. Brecker is on tenor for 'My One and Only Love,' whose beautiful melody is treated insensitively. For a moment, Stern's solo totters on the brink of run-on fingers but calms down to show an accomplished guitarist lurking under his head banging image. 'Original Rays' is back to EWI and a synth sound that for all the world could come from a MIDI interface. Glossy and replete with widdly-widdly-isms for 20 minutes, this concert is a rare Mike Brecker misfire.

His brother Randy's acoustic quintet takes up disc two, and is in keeping with the return to the hard bop climate in American this is a big, meaty, almost gospel-ly, date that deftly combines the rough with the smooth. Taking a very different direction from his fellow trumpeter Miles Davis, 1971 vintage Mitchell (pictured) went for traditional values, revivifying the R&B blowing from his days with Earl Bostic and Ray Charles, tracked by Walter Bishop Jr's sympathetic piano and the experienced Forrest's soulful sax. It's no surprise that this quintet was a big concert draw on the US jazz circuit 50 years ago. Great music, and the sound on this LP is as fat and sumptuous as it should be.



Howard McGhee
Dusty Blue

New Land NEWLAND004 (LP) ★★★★

Howard McGhee (t), Bennie Green (tb), Pepper Adams (bs), Roland Alexander (ts), Tommy Flanagan (p), Ron Carter (b) and Walter Bolden (d). Rec. 1960

Blue Mitchell
Blue Mitchell

New Land NEWLAND002 (LP) ★★★★

Blue Mitchell (t), Walter Bishop Jr (p, el p), Jimmy Forrest (ts), Larry Gales (b) and Doug Sides (d). Rec. 1970

Last year the New Land reissue label made a lot of friends with its very first release, a superb version of Gerry Mulligan's *Night Lights* (*Jazzwise* 269). That circle of admirers is sure to widen still further with the label's republishing of these two albums by a pair of underrated trumpeters, both superbly-packaged and annotated; and beautifully (100-per-cent-analogue) remastered from the original tapes by the estimable Kevin Gray.

The short-lived (he died in 1979, aged just 49) Mitchell's record – sometimes titled *Soul Village* – was originally released on Mainstream in 1971, and as one of his first post-Blue Note dates, tends to get overlooked. That's a shame, because

A decade before *Blue Mitchell* was recorded, be-bop trumpet pioneer McGhee – who many contemporaries rated almost as high as Dizzy Gillespie – was just shaking himself free of his drug addiction, and recorded the excellent *Dusty Blue* for Bethlehem with a stellar cast, including a young Ron Carter, who, on this evidence, already knew how to assert himself at a session.

Interestingly, *Dusty Blue* – a butt-kicking cover of Diz's 'Groovin' High' excepted – chooses to insinuate itself with the listener through seduction (the closing ballad 'Cottage For Sale' is a swoonsome knockout) rather than with speed and force. The three McGhee originals here – the title track, which is lovely, especially – are splendid, and it's puzzling why none of them ever became standards. **Kevin Whitlock**

jazz of the time, championed by Wynton Marsalis. The quintet is a quartet for the opening two numbers, the first featuring Randy Brecker, the second featuring the highly competent Bob Berg. Then the quintet's calm council explores four numbers together and does not so much attempt to raise the roof, but rather, restore calm with barely a bead of perspiration spilt.

Stuart Nicholson

Al Di Meola, John McLaughlin, Paco De Lucia

Saturday Night In San Francisco 12-6-80

Ear Music Classics 0217243EMU (CD, LP, DL)/Impex IMP8324 (LP, SACD)

★★★★

Al Di Meola, John McLaughlin and Paco De Lucia (g). Rec. 6 December, 1980

Friday Night In San Francisco is of course the stuff of legend, an album that not only propelled the three featured stars beyond their worlds of flamenco and jazz and onto a wider stage, but also brought the acoustic guitar, nylon or steel stringed, and classical flamenco into fresh focus.

Di Meola and Impex pieced this release together from tapes of what was the final night of concerts. One bonus is that all the material is different from the Friday night session. Moreover, there's richer emphasis on De Lucia's work. Although bottom-billed, his work, especially rhythmically, cements the programme. He has a gorgeous solo piece, 'Monasterio de Sal', exhibiting his own forays into 'New Flamenco', which he did so much to create, not without a little controversy. Other stand outs include a breakneck 'Splendido Sundance', so typical of Di Meola of the time. Not perhaps the most subtle, but certainly dramatic.

Most satisfying, however, is a 13-minute take on McLaughlin's 'Meeting of the Spirits' which has a more moderate pace, and crucially a range of dynamics not so prevalent in the other songs. And of course there's space a plenty for the three to solo in their own styles but also to spark off each other.

A vision from another time, another whole sound world, and of course De Lucia is sadly missed: but still a concert and a trio to savour. **Andy Robson**

Eddie Harris

Live at Fabrik

Jazzline CD77106/LP78106 (2CD, 2LP, DL) ★★★★

Eddie Harris (t, ts, p, v), Darryl Thompson (g), Ray Peterson (b) and Norman Fearrington (d). Rec. 24 January 1988

Vocalist, multi-instrumentalist, inventor, and creative box of tricks Eddie Harris left a legacy of new instruments, great tunes and a unique approach to tenor sax.

There was that light, centred tone that dripped soul, classic tunes – "Freedom Jazz Dance" is featured here – and a bucketload of sonic aids; sax mouthpieces customised for brass, electronic harmonisers and wind synths part of a long and patented list.

Yet he still floats below the radar some 25 years after his death. Fortuitously, the full Eddie Harris is showcased on this first-time release of his quartet's 1988 performance at Hamburg's Fabrik jazz club. Those slinky lines and hard-to-pin-down sound? Check out his precisely placed slurs bringing 'Blue Bossa' to life. Fluency and control? Check out 'Ice Cream', a solo sax tour de force of poised balladry, fluent octave leaps, implied harmonies and the phonics of the avant garde.

Elsewhere, the surreal vocal acrobatics of 'Carnival' deliver nonsense syllables, beatbox rhythms and harmonised synthesised sighs and a fast 'Freedom Jazz Dance' shifts gear. CD2 is bookended by groove – 'Ambidextrous' mid-tempo, 'Get on Down', the encore, hardcore funk – and 'Vexatious Progressions' delivers yet more electronically enhanced vocal tricks.

Tracks are long, with lots of space for a rhythm section that doesn't break boundaries but more than does the job. Guitarist Darryl Thompson – saxophonist Lucky's son – is the standout, though a couple of tracks could do with a trim

The sardonically titled 'Eddie Who?' closes the set. And if you don't know the answer, the song's lyrics spell out why you should. **Mike Hobart**

Album Interview

Brian Auger & The Trinity

Far Horizons

Soul Bank Music SBM028 (5 LP) ★★★★ **RECOMMENDED**

Brian Auger (Hammond org, p, v), Vic Briggs (g), Gary Boyle (g, v), Rick Laird, Roger Sutton, Dave Ambrose, Ricky Brown (b), Phil Kinorra, Micky Waller, Clem Cattini, Clive Thacker (d), Julie Driscoll (v, g) with various brass and strings. Rec. 1967-1970

Far Horizons is four classic albums revived on vinyl, as befits their 1960s vintage. Post-Steampacket, Auger conjured his jazz, pop and R&B experience into the heady cocktail that was the Trinity. 1967's *Open* kicks in with yeah, baby, Summer of Love instrumentals. But when Julie Driscoll (later Tippetts) rockets in with 'Tramp', and climaxes with the iconic 'Season of the Witch' you know you're in a panda-eyed world where every musical style is up for grabs.

Definitely What! digs the jazz seam deeper, notably covering Montgomery's 'Bumpin' on Sunset'. "I got a letter from Wes's wife," recalls Auger, "saying that was the best of covers. Can you believe that, Wes's wife wrote to me!" But it's *Streetnoise* that captures 1968's heavier *zeitgeist*. Originals like 'Tropic of Capricorn' remind us that Auger was pals with Keith Emerson and that ELP are just around the corner, while Driscoll's 'Czechoslavakia', reminds us that Russian tanks on the streets didn't start with Ukraine. Stuck for original material to fill a double album, Auger and Driscoll chose covers so evocative of the time: 'Let the Sunshine In' from *Hair*, Driscoll's orgasmic take on the Doors' 'Light My Fire' and Nyro's ecstatic 'Save the Country.' "Julie took me back to hear *Eli and the 13th Confession*: what an album!" However it's the cover of Miles' 'All Blues' with a Driscoll lyric that reveals how Augur melded the musical styles of that epoch. "Gomelski (manager and 'producer') said it was shit: but I told Eddie (Offord, engineer extraordinaire) to keep it." *Befour*, without Driscoll, is jazz and funk-rich, with a thumping Sly Stone cover, a glowing cut of Herbie's 'Maiden Voyage' and a funk-struck 'Listen Here'.

Jazzwise spoke to Brian Auger

How did it all begin for you and jazz?

Dad had a pianola with this collection of piano rolls, ragtime, everything: as a four-year-old I worked out how to load them and then pedal away: I got to hear all this wonderful music. And my older brother had this collection: Duke Ellington and stuff like that. And then when I was evacuated to Bradford in 1944, they had a piano and that was the beginning...

So it was all about the piano originally?

Yeah, I'd hide away after school and play Winifred Atwell songs like 'Cross Hand Boogie' on their Bechstein; when I got found, the head said "What is that you are playing, Augur?", "Boogie woogie, sir". He made me play at morning assembly. I brought the house down! By the late 1950s, I was playing a pub band in Southall, I loved Oscar Peterson, when I got a call from Jimmy Skidmore (Alan's dad) and that set me on my way.

But then you discovered the Hammond?

In 1964 I heard this amazing sound coming from a record shop in Shepherd's Bush, and it was Jimmy Smith's *Back at the Chicken Shack*. I had to get Hammond UK to order me a B3 from from the US. I had to go up there to help put it together for them.

The jazz, pop and blues scene was a bit tribal then...

Not for me. I'd supported Americans... Mose Allison, Eddie Harris, I was due to record with Nat Adderley; Les McCann. I got on really well with Roland Kirk. One night as he came off stage at Ronnie's, having finished off with his three sax thing, he heard my voice, reached out, and whispered, 'Brian, why aren't I playing with your trio?' **Andy Robson**

Oceans of Silver and Blood
Acetate

Confront Recordings CORE 02EP (CD, DL) ★★★

Joachim Nordwall (analogue syn, tapes, effects) and Mark Wastell (tam tam, timpani). Rec. date not stated

The two shimmering yet visceral improvisations on this mini-album were originally released on Nordwall's own imprint back in 2014. Sadly, only 20 vinyl copies (all of them signed by the participants) were made, so this Confront reissue is most welcome as we all get to hear this much-talked-about release for ourselves. And worth talking about it was, because this is compelling improv, demonstrating that you don't have to shout to make your point. 'Eca' is like William Basinski's *Disintegration Loops* in reverse – improvised *out* of entropy rather than decaying *into* it; while 'Etat' sounds like the soundtrack to a movie full of insistent, looming horror, the musicians carried along by the images unfolding before their eyes. **Kevin Whitlock**

Vic Parker
At The Quebec Hotel

Bell CD521 (CD) ★★★

Vic Parker (g), Chris Hodgkins (t) and Jed Williams (d).
Rec. 14 January and 4 February 1976

As Val Wilmer's fascinating note makes clear, Parker was 'a Cardiff legend', locally born but of West Indian stock and a versatile player who had quite a story. Here he largely confines himself to chorded accompaniments to these aspiring musicians, taking the occasional solo while giving their performances a considerable lift, these live recordings taken from Hodgkins' regular Monday and Wednesday duo gigs with Parker at the Quebec Hotel in Cardiff.

Hodgkins, already then a keen 'hot' trumpet player was clearly seeking to develop his range, building ambitious solos over Parker's chords on these standard numbers, with Williams sitting in on the opening 11 pieces. Later to become the Director of Jazz Services in London, Hodgkins has now returned to live playing and recording; his lifetime pal, Jed Williams, who died some years back, went on to become the charismatic Artistic Director of the Brecon Jazz Festival and founding Editor of *JazzUK* magazine. I've been lucky enough to know and work with both men and can only commend these recordings as a lively and pleasing tribute to both Parker and Williams and an intriguing glimpse into Hodgkins' early jazz activities. If the sound quality is only so-so, there's enough to here to show that Parker who died in 1978 was definitely 'deserving of wider recognition' as Val says, and for that reason alone, it's good that these recordings have survived. **Peter Vacher**

Max Roach
Members, Don't Git Weary

Atlantic/Real Gone Music RGM 1392 (LP, DL) ★★★★★

Max Roach (d), Jimmy Merritt (el b), Gary Bartz (as), Charles Tolliver (t), Stanley Cowell (el p) and Andy Bey (v) Rec. 1968

Almost a decade after recording the 1959 masterpiece *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite*, a landmark in modern-day socially conscious music, Max Roach made this no less important album, that was almost a kind of progress report on the lack of progress in the field of race relations and equality in post-Civil Rights America. No title could have been more resonant than *Members, Don't Git Weary* quite simply because it is a rallying cry for people of colour and the disenfranchised in general who are beaten down by an oppressive majority.

Like all significant band-leaders, Roach, also a pioneering drummer and composer, saw the importance of bringing younger players into the fold and the presence of pianist Stanley Cowell was decisive insofar as he contributed fabulous original material in addition to his excellent performance as both sideman and soloist.

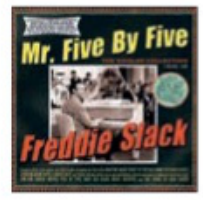
Pieces like 'Abstrutions, 'Effi' and 'Equipoise' tied together blues, modalism and lyricism of the highest order, while another highlight 'Libra', by saxophonist Gary Bartz was a brilliant piece of odd metered post-bop that breathed new energy into classic 'small group jazz.'

But nothing was more powerful than the title track, a soul stirring freewheeling anthem given deep emotion by the heavenly voice of Andy Bey. It is the crowning glory of a startling set of six songs that have retained both musical appeal and political power five decades after their creation. **Kevin Le Gendre**

Freddy Slack
Mr Five By Five: The Singles Collection 1940-49

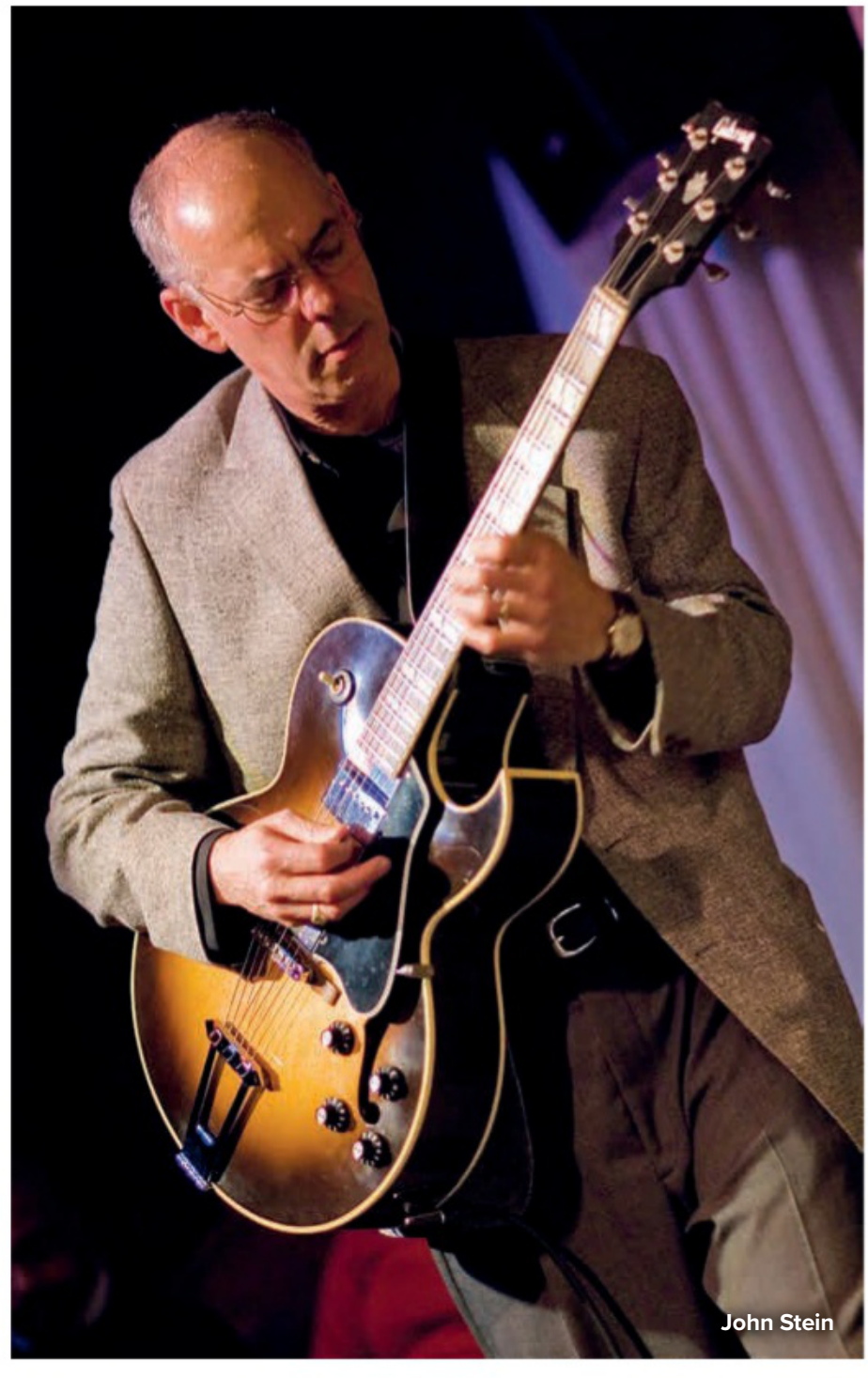
Acrobat ADDCD3435 (2 CD) ★★★

Freddie Slack (p, arr) with Will Bradley & His Orchestra, Joe Turner & Freddie Slack, Freddie Slack & His 8 Beats, Freddie Slack & His Orchestra, with Ella Mae Morse, Johnny Mercer, Big Joe Turner and T-Bone Walker (v). Rec. 21 May 1940- 14 June 1949.



Acrobat's foray into the world of white big-band swing continues with this double-CD collation of the hit singles accrued by Wisconsin-born pianist Freddie Slack. The arrangement of 'Beat Me Daddy Eight To The Bar', which he co-authored with trombonist Will Bradley made while he was with the Bradley-Ray McKinley band in 1940 which opens here made his name. Its cheery boogie-woogie feel chimed with the war-time vogue for this piano style, so much so that the triumvirate of Slack-Bradley-McKinley continued to record more of the same. Slack's solo success then led him to form his own big band in 1942 and to continue churning out boogie features and decent dance tracks well into the post-war period.

Happily for blues fans, Slack and his trio took time out in 1941 to record four titles with the great blues shouter Big Joe Turner and they're all here. 'Blues for Central Avenue' celebrates Los Angeles' black main-stem and Slack fits in perfectly behind Turner's stentorian tones, guitarist Al Hendrickson's guitar fills just right too. A year later, Slack



John Stein

Credit

backed Texan star T-Bone Walker on a couple of tracks, Slack letting Walker's guitar and strong vocal make the running. Good to have. 'Cow Cow Boogie' also from 1942 gave vocalist Ella Mae Morse and the band a major hit and it is here too. Many of these tracks have spirited trumpet passages and decent trombone breaks, the players anonymous but all worth hearing, this fairly typical of the hotter-sounding white dance bands of the day. If some of these band charts sound a bit like cut-rate Glenn Miller then so be it: jazz-minded readers may prefer the boogie-based small group tracks with star guitarist Remo Palmieri. Worth considering. **Peter Vacher**

John Stein
Lifeline

Whaling City Sound WCS136 (2 CD)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

John Stein (g), Phil Grenadier (t), David 'Fathead' Newman (as, fl), Fernando Brandão, Rebecca Kleinman (fl), Larry Goldings, Alexandre Zamith (p), Daniel Grajew, Koichi Sato, Jake Sherman (kbd), Ken Clark (org), Evan Harlan (acc), Keala Kaumeheiwa, Frank Herzberg, John Lockwood, Dave Zinno (b), Ed Lucie (b-g), Greg Conroy, Zé Eduardo Nazario, Dave Hurst, Yoron Israel, Mike Connors, Matias Mingote German (d), Pedro Ito (perc) and Ron Gill (v). Rec. 1999–2021

We reviewed Kansas City guitarist Stein's Whaling City *Serendipity* CD favourably in our October 2021 issue, while admitting that his was a new name to us. That album was timed to coincide with his retirement from a long-term professorial role at Berklee and marked his desire to get back into full-time jazz performance. Then came lockdown. Although hardly known over here, Stein had recorded regularly for the New Bedford-based label for over 20 years, this new double album a celebration of that association with tracks culled from his 15 albums for them.

Neatly packaged in a glossy fold-over digipack, it's a welcome rundown of his music for the label. The opening track 'Up and At 'Em' is a gem, Newman surprisingly fleet on alto, well away from his usual bluesy tenor manner, Stein commendably agile, the effect much like that achieved by Jim Hall and Paul Desmond. One might have wished for more from this 1999-2001 period by what was evidently a working band. 'Hotcakes' is livelier, with a neat motif, Newman on flute this time and combining well with Clark's organ lines, this one of the swingier tracks collected here. Otherwise, Stein moves through a variety of settings, his guitar pleasingly articulate and even-mannered, with Brazilian rhythms engaging his attention often, the various sidemen listed buckling down capably.

He's clearly a player of consequence, nearer to Hall than Scofield in sound and style, who might want to look further afield now that he's at liberty. I'd like to hear him in faster company with stronger horns alongside. Why not? **Peter Vacher**

David Sylvian
Blemish

Samadhisound/UMC 3876873 (LP, DL)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

David Sylvian (v, prod), Derek Bailey (el g) and Christian Fennesz (elec). Rec. February–March 2003

Manafon

Samadhisound/UMC 3876876 (2 LP, DL) ★★★

David Sylvian (v, g, ky, elec), Evan Parker (ts, ss), Keith Rowe, Buckhardt Stangl (el g), Christian Fennesz (el g, elec), Werner Dafeldecker (b), Michael Moser, Marcio Mattos (clo), Franz Hautzinger (t), John Tilbury (p), Otomo Yoshihide (g, turntables), Tetuzi Akiyama (g, el g) and Sachiko Matsubara (elec). Rec. 2004–2007

David Sylvian's journey from pretty pop idol to the outer reaches of the avant-garde is equalled by few other musicians: the late great Scott Walker for one, Julie Driscoll/Tippetts perhaps another. Sylvian (born Dave Batt) found huge success with the androgynous pop group Japan in the late 1970s and early 80s, but following their split, began a long voyage into the experimental realm with a series of increasingly challenging solo albums, shedding much of his original audience along the way (as Walker did).

It's a measure of both the respect he commands and his openness to new ideas that throughout his career, Sylvian has managed to attract the services of first-rate musicians such as Kenny Wheeler, Holger Czukay, Ryuichi Sakamoto, Jon Hassell, Robert Fripp, Bill Nelson, David Torn, Mark Isham and Danny Thomson, and these two albums see him rounding up a number of free-music titans, notably Derek Bailey, Evan Parker and Keith Rowe.

Blemish, the first album made after his split with Virgin Records, was originally released online, then as a very limited LP and CD; making this superb-sounding vinyl reissue extremely welcome. It's a starkly beautiful record, entirely improvised with Bailey and, unusually for Sylvian, lyrically and vocally direct (both his career and personal life were unravelling at the time), with Bailey's jarring, percussive plucking and his feedback drones providing the perfect accompaniment to the singer's anguish.

In fact, the late guitarist's extraordinary playing (given added texture by Fennesz's electronic manipulations) is jaw-dropping in its inventiveness, virtuosity and sensitivity. Bailey and Sylvian made truly beautiful music together, and it's a pity they didn't make more of it.

Manafon, recorded with a larger cast over a longer period of time, feels more diffuse, less focused, but no less forbidding. Again, the collaborators – principally Rowe, Parker and Fennesz – are well-chosen; they provide suitably spiky yet restrained and sympathetic improvised backing for Sylvian's musings (calling them 'songs' feels like a bit of a stretch), the best of which is the 11-minute album centrepiece 'The Greatest Living Englishman'.

Again, an appreciated (and splendid-sounding) reissue for a now-very-pricey original. **Kevin Whitlock**

Horace Tapscott
Legacies For Our Grandchildren: Live In Hollywood 1995

Dark Tree DTRS16 (CD) ★★★★

Horace Tapscott (p), Michael Session (t, a, ss), Thurman Green (tb), Roberto Miranda (b), Fritz Wise (d) and Dwight Trible (v). Rec. 1995

Like many significant figures in improvised music, pianist-composer-bandleader Horace Tapscott recorded much more material than was released in his lifetime. The Dark Tree label has emerged as a significant curator of his work, and this latest session will be welcomed by converts and newcomers alike.

As was the case with so much of Tapscott's work, the stage was where he really came alive and the energy levels of the band are high from the downbeat. With no sense of artifice the music shifts seamlessly from tight rhythmic structures to looser, freer passages all the while keeping a strong pulse and hard swing, as befits a bandleader who clearly understood the modernist substance of innovators such as Monk and Jaki Byard. The band is superb, but vocalist Dwight Trible absolutely steals the show with his eruptive interpretation of the gospel anthem 'Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child'

Kevin Le Gendre

John Taylor Sextet

Fragment

Jazz In Britain JIB-32-5-CD (CD) ★★★★

John Taylor (p, el p), Kenny Wheeler (t, flhn), Chris Pyne (tb), Stan Sulzmann (ts, f), Chris Laurence (b), Tony Levin (d). Rec. January 1975

This very welcome blast from the past is well-recorded, and had it been released by the EMI Lansdowne Jazz Series or the Argo label back in 1975, it would most definitely be a collector's item today of the sort that notches up four figures. Here, at more modest cost, is a gem of British jazz from its most collectable period, capturing Taylor's sextet – an 'A' list of British jazz musicians – on a creative high. Taylor's influence among aspiring pianists was already considerable during his lifetime, but even he would be amazed how it has grown since his passing, not just in the UK, but in Europe, and especially in Germany, where he was Professor of Jazz Piano at the University of Cologne.

This album gives eloquent testimony why. Taylor has rightly been praised for the quality of his writing, and here all tracks are composed by him, and other than the two acoustic piano episodes, are arranged by him as well. While Taylor acknowledges jazz-rock, the contemporary disposition of the remaining tracks prompts memorable solos from Sulzmann and Pyne, while Kenny Wheeler soars, his seemingly effortless originality an album highlight alongside Taylor, who really is enjoying himself on this session.

Stuart Nicholson

Mal Waldron

Searching In Grenoble: The 1978 Solo Piano Concert

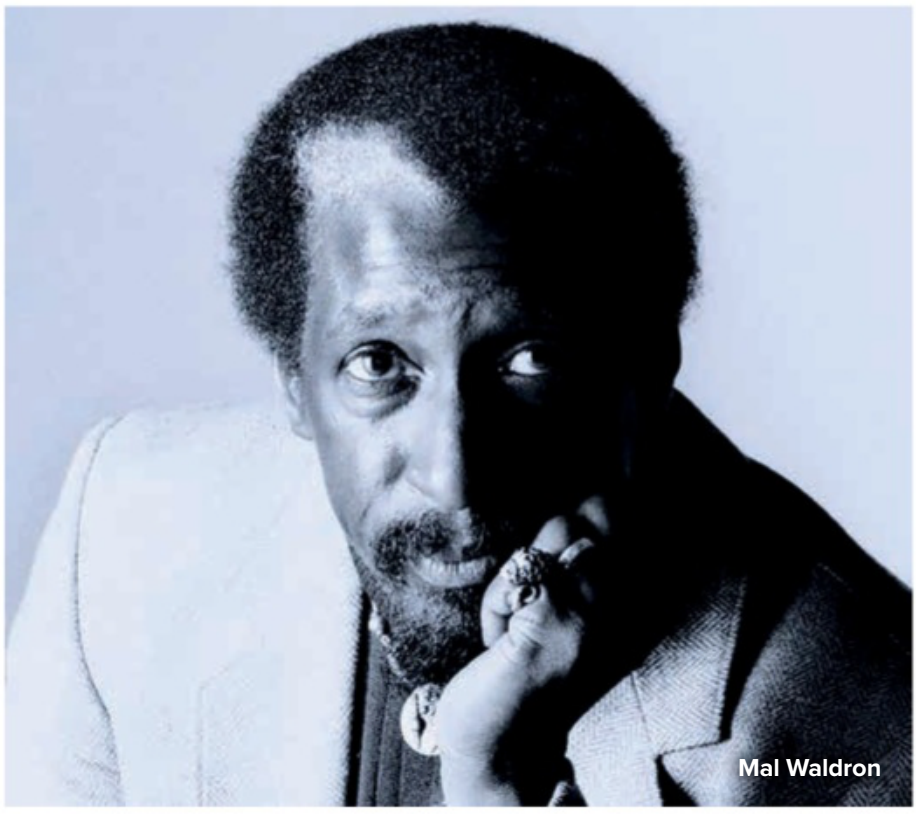
Tompkins Square/INA TSQ 5906 (2CD, DL) ★★★

Mal Waldron (p). Rec. 23 March 1978

Previously unissued, this is another release by producer Zev Feldman, taken from the vaults of Radio France. Despite his fairly regular return visits to the USA, Waldron was resident in Europe for the second half of his life and he recorded prolifically in solo, duo and trio settings.

The focus on solo work is the point here and, starting out with the longest continuous track (lasting 23'25"), Waldron pulls the listener into his personal space. (The disproportionate timing of the two CDs, lasting 65'35" and 37'45" respectively, doubtless mirrors the original concert.) Repertoire is mostly original, including several titles that Waldron recorded elsewhere such as 'Snake Out', 'All Alone' and the better-known 'Fire Waltz' and 'Soul Eyes', with only three American Songbook standards, many of these tracks lasting well over five minutes.

There's a certain sense of relentless insistence in Waldron's playing, even at ballad tempo, underlined by playing all his left-hand chords in root position (as did his contemporaries, Monk and Powell, but with more rhythmic variety). And yet the Grenoble audience, and the potential home listener, are drawn into his musings. **Brian Priestley**



Mal Waldron

STOLEN MOMENTS...

Forgotten gems from the jazz vaults

Martial Solal

Martial Solal at Newport '63

RCA Victor SF 7614 (LP)

Martial Solal (p), Teddy Kotick (b) and Paul Motian (d). Rec. 7 July 1963

Pianist Martial Solal was born in Algeria and moved to Paris in February 1950 to further his career in jazz. George Wein, the Newport Jazz Festival producer, invited Solal to appear at the 1963 festival, and arranged a few dates beforehand at New York's Hickory House on 52nd Street to warm-up with an American rhythm team of Kotick and Motian (Bill Evans had gone alone to California at this time). The engagement was a huge success, his stay extended to six weeks, then 10. Word about this unknown French pianist had spread fast. Musicians, critics and the public came to marvel at the technique of Art Tatum, Bud Powell's mastery of bebop and the lyrical poise and eloquence of Teddy Wilson all bound up in a highly original package.

Two weeks after his arrival in New York, *Time* magazine praised this "amazingly adept virtuoso... who pursues unconventional harmonic flights... with an imagination that is rich to the point of bursting."

These key elements are to the forefront of his Newport recording, plus one extra ingredient – his remarkable technique that comes gloved in service of brilliantly original melodic lines articulated with the delicacy of touch normally associated with a concert pianist. His thematic variation and development on 'Suite Pour One Frise,' with its variations in tempo, immediately signal a pianist at one with his craft. His treatment of 'Stella' by Starlight' and ''Round Midnight' delve deeper into thematic development, this time on familiar tunes, where his variations retain thematic fragments that are spun through first, second and third variations that keep the listener transfixed. The sheer eloquence of his treatment of 'Poinciana,' a recent hit for Ahmad Jamal, when it might be thought that he had said all that could be said on the subject, is carried out with an ease of execution that belies its technical accomplishment.

Producer George Avakain, who signed Miles Davis and Dave Brubeck to Columbia and guided Duke Ellington's renaissance on the label, later wrote: "Martial Solal, Europe's greatest jazz musician today, performs with Americans on their own terms as an equal – or even as a superior – his technique one of the most prodigious ever heard in jazz." **Stuart Nicholson**

FIND IT: *Pre-owned vinyl copies are not hard to find on the internet and vary from £15 to £25, while the CD reissue from 2000, by RCA Victor/BMG comes in at under £20.*

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Classical & World Music Reviews

The editors of our sister music magazines, *Gramophone* and *Songlines*, recommend some of the best new releases this month

Classical

BROUGHT TO YOU BY GRAMOPHONE

Plínio Fernandes
Saudade

Decca Gold 485 7617

Saudade means a melancholy longing, and the São Paulo-born guitarist Plínio Fernandes's debut recording is suffused with it. The repertoire he offers here leans heavily on arrangements of popular songs – the music he heard and loved growing up in Brazil before he moved to London in 2014 to study at the RAM – with Villa-Lobos's *Five Preludes* as the centrepiece.

His tone is gloriously rich – far warmer and rounder than either Bream or Zanon. Not only that but he's acutely attentive to detail. The popular selections are nicely varied and Fernandes takes just as much care with them as he does in the *Preludes*. Thus a harmonically complex song such as 'Ponta de Areia' by Milton Nascimento (from the 1975 album *Minas*) is subtly shaded. Impressive, too, is the way he rarely allows the pervasive feeling of saudade to melt into mere sentimentality, even in numbers that seem frankly sentimental, such as Chilean songwriter Violeta Parra's 'Gracias a la vida', which Fernandes plays here with great feeling.

And there are guests. Cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason plays the vocal solo of the 'Aria' from Villa-Lobos's *Bachianas Brasileiras No 5* with eloquence and surprising sinew. Legendary Brazilian pop singer Maria Rita gives an intimate and almost conversational performance of 'O mundo é um moinho' by Angenor de Olivera (better known as Cartola). And Braimah Kanneh-Mason takes a similar approach to Rita in Sergio Assad's 'Menino'. **Andrew Farach Colton**

Alison Balsom
Quiet City

Warner Classics 9029 62299-1

There's something intensely evocative about the solo trumpet – a plaintive, plangent, melancholic sound that speaks just as eloquently of the great outdoors as it does of the inner city. Of course, the jazz connotations are inescapable when the hour is late and the mood is blue; and if ever a piece were to be the envy of a player such as Alison Balsom then it would surely be Gershwin's small but mighty exercise in fusion, Rhapsody in Blue.

Simon Wright's arrangement of Gershwin's much-loved ground breaker is the centrepiece of this Stateside collection and, you guessed it, it is Balsom who invites us in with that insane glissando. Risky. The clarinet is iconic in this piece, as is the now flashy, now ruminating piano part, which Tom Poster here finds himself sharing with the star of this show and I did find myself thrown by the split focus between its two principal voices, especially where they are sharing or vying for attention.

The central movement of Rodrigo's ubiquitous Concierto de Aranjuez was a tune that proved irresistible for Davis, featuring on his classic album Sketches of Spain in a two-part arrangement by Gil Evans. But the quiet culmination of the album is perhaps the most enduring selection of all: Gil Evans's arrangement – again for Miles Davis – of Kurt Weill's 'My Ship' from Lady in the Dark, where the ache of the tune sits so well for the instrument and the words of the song (and all its innate yearning) are somehow implicit in the sound. **Edward Seckerson**

World Music

BROUGHT TO YOU BY SONGLINES

Maria Rita Stumpf
Ver Tente

Antares SP (34 mins) ★★★★

Mix of old and new material hits the mark for this Brazilian singer

The fourth album by Brazilian singer-songwriter Maria Rita Stumpf, *Ver Tente*, brings together her four decades of musical output. After a 20-year hiatus, in 2017 she re-released her 1988 debut album *Brasileira* – inspiring her renascent cult status around Brazil.

Ver Tente includes adaptations of MPB (Brazilian Popular Music) classics by leading Brazilian artists including Dorival Caymmi, Milton Nascimento and Djavan, as well as five of her own compositions. From simple acoustic strings to immersive orchestration, the album spans a vast range, featuring everything from church organ to Andean *charango*.

And it also showcases Stumpf's stunning vocal versatility, from the lullaby of 'Mata Virgem' to the strident chant of 'Troca de Dono'. Some songs, such as 'O Vento', are even sung in Indigenous languages, adding an elemental feel to the music.

The overriding themes are of the 'real world' and nature, subjects close to Stumpf's heart. Or as she puts it succinctly: 'After my last album *Inkiri Om*, this one completes a cycle, one of creativity and of life.' At just under 34 minutes long, it's rather on the short side, but the broad variety of the ten tracks more than compensates. Not a dud track in the whole album.

Huw Hennessy

Track to try: 'Cântico Brasileiro'

François Robin & Mathias Delplanque
L'Ombre de la Bête

Parenthèses Records (40 mins) ★★★★

An immersive sound from the crossroads of tradition and electronic experimentalism

François Robin has been exploring electro-acoustic sounds for 15 years. A multi-instrumentalist, his instrument of choice is the *veuze* (Breton bagpipes).

With *L'Ombre de la Bête (Shadow of the Beast)*, Robin entrusted the electro-acoustic treatment to Nantes artist and music composer Mathias Delplanque. Together, the two create an immersive music of cinematic proportions with Robin allowing his instruments (*veuzes*, Armenian *duduk*, *mizmar* and violin) to explore the outer realms of imagination with Delplanque guiding, framing and stretching the journey. The results are abandoned flirtings with minimalist, ambient, drone, Krautrock sounds amalgamated with traditional music. The album offers a unique atmosphere that conjures storms, illuminates movement and summons an enveloping euphoria. It playfully draws you in with 'Sous le Cuir' and builds with the synth heavy bass and violin plucking of 'Perdu'. 'Dans l'Ombre' hears the veuze beast released before a moment of contemplation with 'Le Puits'. Then the drones and pipes of 'L'Homme à Tête de Cheval' arrive. The album finishes with a nod to tradition in 'Fin de Règne'.

Buzz Bury

Track to try: 'Dans l'Ombre'

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THE PLAYER

NILS LANDGREN

The Swedish trombonist, scion of a family of brass players, tells **DAVID GALLANT** about how his career started, and about some of the instruments that have helped shape his professional and musical life

"My new Yamaha horn is a screwbell," says Nils Landgren, "so that I can travel without the hassle of always being told at airport check ins, 'You are not allowed to bring golf bags on board sir!' Which has been a common reaction from the ground staff."

Landgren comes from a family of brass players: "My grandfather played cornet and led the local wind orchestra. Dad played cornet in the same orchestra, but he was also a passionate jazz player."

Landgren was just six years old when he picked up the marching drum: "Both my brothers played drums in the wind orchestra, and I wanted to be like them. Playing American swing marches between the tunes as we marched through our town on 1 May was the best. I got lessons on the drums from a friendly teacher who helped me in his free time and of course, my brothers helped as well."

When Landgren was 13, he came back from school one day to find a trombone laying around in the house.

"I tried it and immediately fell in love. We had no music school in our town, so I had to take the bus to Karlskoga where they had a very good one and, I got a teacher fresh from the conservatory. I soon got to play in the youth wind orchestra, the youth symphony orchestra and in the youth big band which my teacher started. I loved to interact with the other players and it made me want to learn more in every direction."

Landgren moved away from home at 16, as he had got a place at the newly started music gymnasium in Karlstad, 80km away. "Then at 18 I went to the Music University of Ingesund in Arvika"

Landgren's first trombone belonged to the music school.

"It was a Buescher, but I've no idea what model it was. I had an American 'bone teacher by the name of David Maytan at the music gymnasium and he brought a King 4b back from one of his trips to the US in 1972.

> ***"I heard Miles Davis using a wah-wah on Live-Evil and I thought, that's what I need! But having said that, sometimes an old-fashioned plunger does the job"***

That was the first instrument I owned and my parents helped me pay for it. They gave me the choice of either a light motorbike or the trombone. I made the right choice!"

Landgren dropped out of University when he was 19 and moved to Stockholm to play jazz as a freelancer. He tells of a story where he was reading in a music magazine that a famous band was looking for a sax player. He decided to try and convince them that they needed a 'bone player instead. When he finally got hold of the bandleader, he was told that they had skipped the idea of having a sax player and, 'trombone was a no no'.

However, he reckons that the bandleader must have felt sorry for him, and after a drunken night of partying with the band and waking up underneath a grand piano, he got the gig!

"That was my first encounter with the world of music outside the school." he laughs. By then, Landgren was playing a Bach 42, a King 3 b and a Conn Constellation depending on the situation.

"I then moved on to work with the pop sensation Björn Skifs, who had just reached No1 in the US with the song 'Hooked on a Feeling'. I stayed with him for 10 years and we are still very good friends," Landgren continues. "Through him I also got to play on the recording of the ABBA song 'Voulez-vous' in 1979. As far as I know, I'm the only 'bone player on an ABBA album!"

Landgren currently plays the Yamaha Nils Landgren model, which he co-designed with Eddie Veit at the atelier in Hamburg.

He offers some context: "I was first approached in 1985 by the head of Yamaha's Scandinavian branch. I said I would be happy to switch under the condition that any new horn is better than the one I was playing at the time, a Bach 12G, and it should be red. The first horn they made for me was a dualbore, which I played up until a couple of years ago when I started to experiment a little again. My new horn has a slightly bigger bore and is a screwbell."

So what about mouthpieces – what does he use?

"After playing at the Yamaha 100th anniversary gig in 1987, I went to the Tokyo atelier and asked them to make me a mouthpiece. I gave them a very vague specification of what I was looking for, but they understood me perfectly and that is the mouthpiece I still play today. My own model."

Landgren's sonic palette is expansive to say the least, so I wondered if pedals came into the equation.

"I have different setups," he confirms. "Sometimes one works and the other not. I use a Boss DD7 delay, a Snowwhite envelope filter and a Boss pitchshifter. The second setup is a Zoom multi-effect for guitar. I like to be able to change the sound sometimes and they don't make one for trombone. And there's no reason why it should just be for guitar players.

"I heard Miles Davis using a wah-wah on his trumpet on the album *Live-Evil* from 1972 and I thought, that's what I need! But having said that, sometimes an old-fashioned plunger does the job."

Instrument News & Reviews

Charlotte Sterland and **David Gallant** check out the latest music tech and accessories for professional and serious amateur musicians

Increasingly iconic legacy synthesisers and keyboards are popping up as virtual studio technology (VST) plugins and are making waves in the production world – we decided to look at two this month:

Roland Jupiter 4

Jupiter 4 is one of Roland's collection of analogue polysynths, a bundle of software synths which simulate their legendary early products, from the JD-800 to the TR-909.

Using Analog Circuit Behaviour (ACB) technology, Roland have analysed the original hardware and circuitry and used data to recreate authentic circuit behaviours of the instrument, which gives the synth a highly accurate and characterful sound. Featuring a single VCO but using an oscillator, filter, LFO and phaser, flanger and other effects to emulates the original hardware well, the new Jupiter 4 will inspire many interesting sounds, just as the original synth did. **(CS)** RRP from £139.99 at **www.gear4music.com** or at **www.rolandcloud.com** under subscription

Martinic Akai AX73

Martinic's AX73, released in 2022 is quite a feat for a synth plugin. With a number of presets available, the synth is best used when programmed for the desired sound, then laid as a keyboard. AX73's range of sounds is immense, as the synth features an LFO, VCO, VCF and VCA.

There are two ways to programme the synth, either via the visual synth layout (mimicking the original AX73 created by Akai in the 1980s) or via the settings screen, which just displays the control knobs and hides the keyboard (as pictured above). Advanced Circuity Emulation (ACE) imitates the original analogue synth components, to re-create not only the original sound to a high degree of accuracy, but also the noise associated with the synth, with a really authentic effect.

This is a great alternative to owning the original synthesiser, which is hard to get hold of these days! RRP is £88 from **www.martinic.com (CS)**

Sonible SmartComp2 Mixing Plugins

Austrian audio software company Sonible has this month released its latest plugin; 'smartComp2'; a compressor for all tracks. The app first 'learns' the audio, as the track plays, using the round key at the top of the app. After this, there are various ways to tweak the sound. The style and colour options on the app can be used to shape the sound further, ranging from 'dark to bright' and 'clean to dirty' with the overall amount of level of compression also changeable via a dial. The compressor can be set via numerous instrument presets (guitar, synth, vocal style, drum type). The attack, release and threshold for the compressor are controllable via line levels, with additional options like 'parallel compressor,' 'noise gate' and side chain ducking. Sonible's AI is based on two types of machine learning: data-driven and model-driven. Model-driven looks at the way signals are processed during mixing and mimics them, while the data driven side looks at deep learning and data, meaning the app has been trained by listening to many different audio samples in order to best guess the ideal limiting.

Similar to Sonible's other apps it offers fast mixing and compression with the idea that the app acts like a mixing assistant, or an extra pair of ears, rather than a replacement for the mixer's expertise. Combining Sonible's AI technology with options for side chain ducking and easy interface and controls to set the compressor up, this plugin is one of Sonible's best yet. **(CS) www.sonible.com/smartcomp2/**

Fibonacci Guitar Strap

The Fibonacci archtop guitar company never does things by halves, and this strap is no exception. The presentation box alone suggests that this is a product that comes with the stamp of quality written all over it. Made from high quality black and brown cow hide, the stitching and finishing of this 3-inch-wide strap is second to none. Heavily padded for maximum comfort, it comes with the usual slip through adjustment sleeve and carries the brand name embossed into the leather - a nice, understated touch.

Comfort is clearly the number one priority and something that has been carefully thought through with this particular product. The padding within the body of the strap extends over the rims of the strap to form a deep cushioned lip, something that we rarely see with even the most expensive of straps. It certainly brings a new level of comfort to the player and is ideal for bass players and those with heavier instruments.

We would recommend this strap to any guitarist, whether they play an archtop or not. Apart from a bespoke strap that we had the pleasure of testing some time ago, and which cost a good deal more than the RRP of £79.99 for this strap, the Fibonacci is by far the most comfortable and beautifully finished strap that has landed on our test bench in recent months. **(DG) www.fibonacciguitars.com**

D'Addario XS coated electric guitar strings

Coated strings are of course nothing new, but curiosity caught up with us and we thought we should take a look at D'Addario's new XS strings for electric guitar, which have followed on from their highly successful XT range. Coated strings have historically had a relatively dull sonic response compared to their uncoated cousins and have always felt slightly strange under the fingers. The XT strings with their 'thin hydrophobic' treatment promised long life with the feel and sonic response of an uncoated string. The XS promises much the same, but instead uses an ultra-thin film to achieve the same result.

We laced up a set of 11s and were immediately struck by the fact that they don't feel like a coated string at all, and the sonic response is as clean and as bright as an uncoated string – with tonal characteristics to match. We initially wondered why D'Addario had launched the XS range. No longer – we reckon this might be shorthand for Xtra Special! **(DG) www.daddario.com**

CORRECTION: The September issue incorrectly named the JJ mouthpiece that we tested as a Savannah DR Custom Baritone mouthpiece.. It was in fact an HR Custom Dark Baritone

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B:Jazzfest

Symphony Hall, Birmingham

B:Jazzfest is organised by the Jazzlines team, based at Symphony Hall, Birmingham. This, their second festival spanned five midweek days, presenting 5pm freebie sets throughout, with a trio of ticketed shows between the Wednesday and Friday. These latter gigs took place on the actual stage of the hall, with chairs placed on tiered platforms, the audience looking out across the vast, vacated space.

Duos were a partial theme, with Bex Burch & Leafcutter John appearing as Boing!, their improvisatory, environmental music alias, then saxophonist Trish Clowes joining pianist Ross Stanley, mixing up originals with tunes by Jobim and Shorter. The most engaging meeting involved trumpeter Byron Wallen and keyboardist Nick Ramm, the pair collaborating since 1995. Even though Clowes/Stanley had already completed an hour-plus set, this double bill of duos turned into an epic session, as Wallen/Ramm embarked on around 90 minutes of the trumpeter's new 'Black Flag' tune-cycle. It's effectively a transformed incarnation of works from nearly two decades back, but with video accompaniment, and some illuminating explanations from Wallen, between each highly evocative composition.

One of the very best 5pm sets came from the Australian trombonist Shannon Barnett, who's now living in Cologne. Her compositions straddled strong themes and diverting improvisation, melding the two sides in line down from Albert Mangelsdorff and Paul Rutherford. Old burbling tradition was mixed with sharp, clean agility. Joined by a local trio, Barnett (like many other artists) had also been participating in the adjoining Summer School. Bassist Amy Coates was particularly impressive here, again matching a driving swing action with a spaciousness more usually found within the realms of free improvisation.

The climactic gig involved Alina Bzhezhinska's HipHarp Collective, presenting the Ukrainian's third new combo witnessed by your scribe during the last four years, at gigs in Coventry and Tallinn.

Now, Bzhezhinska is taking her harp on a hip hop-influenced journey, scintillating over tripping beats provided by her three colleagues on percussion and electric bass. The band was also expanded by guests, including Xhosa Cole (flute, tenor saxophone, Birmingham) and Noushy (vocals, trombone, Glasgow). Also, the local rapper NeOne The Wonderer joined the Collective, as well as bringing on his own band for a couple of numbers. Composers still include Dorothy Ashby and Alice Coltrane, but their pieces were convincingly transposed to a beat-driven symmetry. This set was crammed with so much scene-changing that it flew past with maximum energy, without even mentioning the looming presence of the Ukrainian invasion, as Bzhezhinska moved between steadfast positivity and melancholy mourning. **Martin Longley**

Sligo Jazz Festival/Project

Sligo, Ireland

Sligo Jazz returned in the rudest of vibrant health – and by some margin, Daniel Herskedal's Trio provided the most extraordinary concert of the week. Norwegian leader Herskedal's elemental tuba and bass trumpet effortlessly conjuring the vastness of the sea, Eyolf Dale's piano was the ethereal falling of snow, Helge Andreas Norbakken's percussion grounding the music. This was beyond flawless technique. Unclassifiable music transported us ever deeper into rich, unknown lands.

In her orchestra of virtuosi, guitarist Mike Walker, trombonist Paul Dunlea, tenorists Matt Halpin and Paul Booth shone for the Festival's Composer-in Residence, Nikki Iles, whose concert hinted at the breadth of her range, as pianist, conductor, composer, arranger, and social commentator. Her deeply felt composition, 'Red Ellen' celebrated the doctor, who walked from NE England to London demanding workers' rights, by contrast, 'Big Sky' sprang from the flat landscape near Iles' home.

Christine Tobin and Phil Robson kicked off the week's concerts with a lyrical and earthy set at the Hawk's Well Theatre, displaying beautiful timbre and articulation of voice and guitar, notably when performing unison lines. Later, TRYPL, launched the full-on trumpet, tenor and trombone of Ryan Quigley, Paul Booth, and Trevor Mires in a high-energy charge of Latin-influenced originals. Their brilliance matched by the superb, committed piano of Tomasz Bura with Ricky Quagliato laying a rich carpet of funky beats ably assisted by bassist, Federico Malaman and Paul Clarvis' percussion.

US singer Ashley Pezzotti's set of standards and originals was underpinned by Scott Flanigan's liquid piano runs. John Goldsby's perfect bass and Paul Clarvis' effortless drums giving the vocalist the ideal platform from which to launch her vocal excursions.

Tony Kofi was a revelation. His outstanding saxophone playing coming from deep underlying humility, humanity, and openness. His every phrase spoke truth. Pete Churchill, singer, choirmaster, and consummate educator also stood out.

Throughout the week, the musicians added further sparkle and spectacle in an assortment of smaller groups at various venues. The final concert was a four-hour marathon with more than 22 musicians on stage! **John Philip Murray**

Jazz a Juan Festival

Pinede Gould, Juan-Les-Pins

Juan Les Pins in the historical city of Antibes is host to the oldest jazz festival in Europe and perhaps there's never been a more seductive atmosphere in which to hear live jazz with a stage that backs onto the French Riviera. It was also the setting of the only concert recording of John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* before last year's *Live in Seattle* release. The last weekend of the 61st edition was the most jazz-intensive except for Brazilian icon Gilberto Gil, who was Saturday's headliner. Gil's expressive, sandpaper-y voice was backed by a rocking band that fused influences from the Caribbean, Bossa, Tropicalia-infused sing-a-long anthems, gospel and retro pop. Sunday's opener, the 19-year-old Indonesian piano prodigy Joey Alexander wore his classic jazz influences on his sleeve, breathing new life into well-worn narratives with his elegant sounding trio. Headliner Diana Krall didn't seem herself this evening: was she knackered? Emotionally strained, perhaps? Her voice sounded gruffer with even more vulnerability in her tone than usual. Emphasising her ties to Dylan and Waits as much as Horn and Holiday, she just about held her own, synching imaginative phrasing with understated emotion, on what was a bad night by her standards.

Tigran Hamasyan turned American songbook evergreens on their head with tracks from his *Standart* album even if his dense, introverted lyricism was palpably at odds somewhat with the tranquil setting. Nevertheless, a pulsating trio, featuring Matt Brewer and Damion Reed, offered an adventurous synthesis of clanging nu-metal riff piano, Armenian folk song, and electronica through to funk and bop.

There was an instant shift to party mode as Herbie Hancock hit the stage. His monster line-up could have easily switched to cruise control but instead created a fresh contemporary spin on Herbie's hit-filled electric/jazz-funk back catalogue. Highlights included 'Come Running to Me'; and guitarist Lionel Loueke and bassist James Genus delighted with their audacious pin-sharp grooves. On the encore 'Chameleon' Herbie, now 82, bounced across the stage with his keytar as if he was fronting a boyband. Juan-Les-Pins, he told us, was the first time he had originally played in Europe, and on this evidence, he certainly hasn't played his last.

Selwyn Harris

Photo: Kris Riviera

Jazz Middelheim

Park den Brandt, Antwerp, Belgium

(Photographs: Peter van Breukelen)

Jazz Middelheim in Antwerp is the sibling festival of Gent Jazz, operating with a similar grub'n'booze vibration, and a shared devotion to imaginative programming, particularly when it comes to excursions outside of jazz.

There were various themes between the Friday and Monday (a Belgian public holiday), with Friday's first two acts significantly superior, as Nabou Claerhout led her Trombone Ensemble (five slide horns!) and the versatile singer, flautist, looper and percussionist Esinam fronted her electro-Afro-Brazilian combo.

Saturday's line-up was the most ambitious and adventurous, headed up by the rockin' Iggy Pop and Thurston Moore, with Taxi Wars next on the bill, featuring dEUS frontman Tom Barman along with jazzers Robin Verheyen (saxophone) and Antoine Pierre (drums). That day's roster was completed by our own Alabaster DePlume, plus the punky improvising drummer Karen Willems. Iggy gave one of his most crazed, manic performances, his band featuring a soul-style horn section of trumpet and trombone, all the better to power his unhinged reading of 'Search & Destroy', as well as the lesser-heard 'Five Foot One' and 'The Endless Sea'. The crowd were on the verge of violent anarchy.

Sunday involved a mostly Belgian programme, topped by a two-part centenary celebration of the departed Toots Thielemns, who always had a very strong connection to Middelheim. The Brussels Jazz Orchestra opened, but their set sounded quite unremarkable compared to the climactic Metropole Orkest presentation, featuring Grégoire Maret (pictured above left) on Toots-ing harmonica. Vince Mendoza suavely emceed. This set was mellower, but held a quiet concentration, a classic sensitivity for sweeping arrangements, and a continued change-of-scene that captivated the huge, seated crowd into complete silence (what a contrast with the Iggy-chaos!). The closing Monday focused largely on guitarists, with Jakob Bro, Kurt Rosenwinkel and Philip Catherine all operating on a placid level of liquidity. It was Aka Moon (above right) that leapt out with a shock, marking their 30th anniversary with guesting Portuguese accordionist João Barradas. This augmented trio nervily funked out after the fashion of Prime Time, James Chance and Steve Coleman, investigating flexible time signatures, entwined relationships and bold, sinewy riffing between drums, saxophone and electric bass. Anniversaries, anarchy and a returning internationalism: all of these made this a winning Middelheim. **Martin Longley**

Avishai Cohen Trio

Ronnie Scott's, London

If there's one thing that makes Israeli bassist-composer Avishai Cohen a compelling performer, it's his intensely close relationship with his instrument: when it comes to that bass, he's not just a player, he treats it like a lover, a beloved child, a deadly adversary; he's a man who both tenderly caresses his bass, but also goes into batlle with it. It's a passionate, multi-faceted relationship, a kind of musical version of three-dimensional chess or what used to be called 'physical theatre'. For a natural showman like Cohen, a composer possessed of considerable melodic gifts, it means that his appeal potentially stretches way beyond jazz.

Tonight at a sold-out Ronnie's, Cohen's musical companions were two fellow virtuoso show-offs – his old mucker, pianist Elchin Shirinov and the remarkable young Aussie drummer Roni Kaspi. Both featured on his most recent trio album, the superb *Shifting Sands* (*Jazzwise* 277), from which the bulk of the material in this 10-tune set was drawn, and both act as brilliant musical and theatrical foils for the leader, one solo (during 'Joy') from Kaspi in particular drawing gasps and applause from the appreciative crowd. A trio of virtuosi who enjoy demonstrating their gifts can be a recipe for self-indulgence, but this threesome bounce so well off each other, and enjoy each other's musical company so much, that they meld into a fearsomely powerful unit. 'Seattle', 'Shifting Sands' and 'The Window' demonstrated that jazz can be as hard-hitting as rock, while Cohen's sawing, bowed bass on 'Hitragut' created an almost synth-like sound-world, while the extraordinary stop-start-stop workout at the end of 'Joy' had the audience confounded (in the best possible way).

"We're working hard for you tonight... it's the only way we know," joked Cohen between stunning versions of 'Dvash' and 'Video Game'. This evening, as the sated crowd dispersed into the Soho night, it was definitely a case of hard work paying off.

Kevin Whitlock

Gig Guide October 2022

Rosie Hanley previews the must-see gigs and concerts. Send future listings to **roseanne.hanley@gmail.com**

All listings are run free but due to space restrictions cannot be guaranteed to appear – expanded gig listings can be found at **www.jazzwise.com/gig-guide**

Snarky Puppy finish their European tour with a run of UK dates this month that end at Wembley Arena on 7 October

Photo: Justin De Souza

SATURDAY

1 Newcastle Festival of Jazz and Improvised Music: Black Top, Nicole Mitchell, Daniel Levin and more
Various venues, Newcastle

1 Matt Anderson Quartet
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

1 Ineza with Alex Webb Trio
Hampstead Jazz Club, The Duke of Hamilton, 23-25 New End, Hampstead, London NW3

1 Dave Koz
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

1 Sara Dowling
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

1 Laura Jurd
Turner Sims, University of Southampton, Highfield Campus, Southampton

1 Bill Charlap Trio
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

1 Scottish National Jazz Orchestra
Glasgow Royal Concert Hall, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow

1 Dale Storr
St Augustine's Parish Centre, Larchfield Street, Darlington

1 Ed Jones
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

1 Brighton Jazz Festival: Keyon Harrold and Tomorrow's Warriors
Horatio's Bar, Brighton Pier

SUNDAY

2 Ian Shaw
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

2 NFJIM: Bex Burch & Leafcutter John, Zoe Gilby Trio, Farida Amadou and more
Various venues, Newcastle

2 Paul Towndrow International Group
Merchants House, West George Street, Glasgow

2 Nicole Mitchell and Alexander Hawkins
Cafe Oto, 18-22 Ashwin Street, London E8

2 Five Points Gang and Emma Wilson
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

2 Marco Marconi and Lauren Bush
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

2 Ronnie Scott's Blues Explosion
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

2 Fergus Quill Imaginary Big Band
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

2 Smokin' Spitfires
Cluny, Lime Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

2 The Fraser Weekes Quartet
Plymouth Jazz Club, The Royal British Legion Club, Tailyour Road, Crownhill, Plymouth

2 Brighton Jazz Festival: Binker Golding and Chelsea Carmichael
Horatio's Bar, Brighton Pier

MONDAY

3 The Charlie Bates Big Band
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

3-4 James Taylor Quartet
Jazz Cafe, 5 Parkway, Camden, London NW1
Powerful and funky acid jazz from the renowned James Taylor Quartet as they take up a two-day residency in the North London club. Expect jazz funk with driving rhythmic sounds and off-the-charts improv.

3 Helen Sung Trio
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

TUESDAY

4 Shaney Forbes Quintet
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11

4 Hetty and the Jazzato Band
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

4 Helen Sung Trio
Watermill Jazz, Betchworth Park Golf Club, Dorking

4 Keyon Harrold
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

4 Snarky Puppy
O2 Academy, Glasgow

4 Big Kettle Jazz
St Ives Jazz Club, Western Hotel, Royal Square, Gabriel Street, St Ives, Cornwall

WEDNESDAY

5 Hot Club du Nord
St Wilfred's Church, Kirkharle Courtyard, Kirkharle

5 Laura Jurd
Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1

5 Snarky Puppy
O2 Academy, Glasgow

5 Martin Taylor and Ulf Wakenius
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

5 Boing feat. Leafcutter John
Jazz at the Lescar, The Lescar Hotel, Sharrowvale Road, Sheffield

5 Aspyrian
Hampstead Jazz Club, The Duke of Hamilton, 23-25 New End, Hampstead, London NW3

5 Nicki Allen
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

5 Roland Perrins AfroJula
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

THURSDAY

6 Brass Funkeys, plus Baghdaddies
Cluny, Lime Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

6-9 Marsden Jazz Festival: Gary Crosby Trio, Aaron Ghosh, Ruby Wood and more
Various venues, Marsden

6 Tom Remon and David Lyttle
Hampstead Jazz Club, The Duke of Hamilton, 23-25 New End, Hampstead, London NW3

6 Snarky Puppy
O2 Apollo, Stockport Road, Manchester

6 Jeremy Pelt Quintet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1

6 Snowpoet
St George's Bristol, Great George Street (off Park Street), Bristol

6 Matt Ridley
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham

6 DC Trio
Jazz Re:Freshed, 91 Living Room, Brick Lane, London E1

6 Ida Nielsen and the Funkbots
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

6 Rachel Musson, Olie Brice and Mark Sanders
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16

6 Jean Toussaint
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds

6 Glenn Miller and Big Band Spectacular
Tyne Theatre, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne

6 Tim Garland
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

FRIDAY

7 Snarky Puppy
OVO Arena Wembley, London
The Texas groove titans take jazz to stadium-sized levels as they play their biggest UK show to date at the storied Wembley Arena.

7 Anth Purdy
Waterford Arms, Collywell Bay Road, Seaton Sluice

7-8 Port Erin Jazz Festival: Alan Barnes, Dave Newton and more
Various venues, Port Erin, Isle of Man

7 Robert Mitchell's True Think
Wakefield Jazz, Sports Club, 8 Eastmoor Road, Wakefield

7 Tommy Smith
Crossmichael Church, Main Street, Crossmichael, Castle Douglas

7 Noemi Nuti
Hampstead Jazz Club, The Duke of Hamilton, 23-25 New End, Hampstead, London NW3
Brilliant vocalist Noemi Nuti performs tunes from her recent album 'Venus Eye' alongside pianist Chris Eldred, drummer Ben Brown and bassist Jason Reyes.
7 Natalie Duncan Trio
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
7-8 Billy Hart Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
7-8 Light of the World
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
7 The Roberto Pla Latin Ensemble
Pizza Express LIVE, 99 High Holborn, London WC1
7 Shijin
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
7 Tim Knowles Quartet
JATP Jazz, Bradford Latvian Club, Bradford
7 Andrew McCormack Trio
Jennifer Blackwell Performance Space, B:Music, Birmingham
7 Julian Siegel Quartet
Birmingham Jazz, 1000 Trades, 16 Frederick Street, Birmingham
7 Mark Porter
Swansea Jazz Club, The Garage Music Venue, 47 Uplands Crescent, Swansea
7 Dean Stockdale
Saltburn Community Hall, Albion Terrace, Saltburn-by-sea
7 Lex Cameron
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SATURDAY

8 Paul Skerritt with Danny Miller Big Band
Westovian Theatre, Pier Parade, South Shields
8 Clare Teal and Jason Rebello
The Pheasantry, 152/154 Kings Road, London SW3
8 Tim Whitehead Quartet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
8 Roger Beaujolais Quartet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
8 Vijay Iyer
Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1
8 Mark Lockheart's Dreamers
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
8 Hugh Pascall Quartet
Shrewsbury Jazz, The Hive, 5 Belmont Street, Shrewsbury

SUNDAY

9 Chip Wickham
Cluny, Lime Street, Newcastle upon Tyne
9 Blue Jazz Quartet
Globe, Railway Street, Newcastle upon Tyne
9 Gabrielle Ducomble
The Pheasantry, 152/154 Kings Road, London SW3
9 Big Band Metheny
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
9 Esther Bennett Trio
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
9 Ana Gracey (lunchtime)
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
9 606 Gospel Group
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

Noemi Nuti: Hampstead, 7 October

9 Laura Jurd
Justham Family Room and Jane How Room, B:Music, Birmingham
9 Tees Vally Jazzmen
Hammer & Pincers, Preston Lane, Preston-le-Skerne, Newton Aycliffe

MONDAY

10 Martin Taylor and Ulf Wakenius
Band on the Wall, 25 Swan Street, Manchester
10 Sloth Racket
Cafe Oto, 18-22 Ashwin Street, London E8
10 Espen Eriksen Trio
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
10 Central Bar Quintet
Central Bar, Half Moon Lane, Gateshead

TUESDAY

11 Dean Stockdale Trio
Forum Music Centre, Borough Road, Darlington
11 5 Way Split
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11
11 Ravi Coltrane
Barbican Centre, Silk Street, London EC2
Joined by pianist Gadi Levahi, bassist Dezron Douglas and drumme Elé Howell, saxophonist Ravi Coltrane explores the music of his parents John and Alice Coltrane. Not to be missed.
11 Juanita Euka
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
11 Gretchen Parlato
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
11 Buster Birch
Watermill Jazz, Betchworth Park Golf Club, Dorking
11 Big Kettle Jazz
St Ives Jazz Club, Western Hotel, Royal Square, Gabriel Street, St Ives, Cornwall
11 Dan Reinstein
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

WEDNESDAY

12 Daniel Karlsson Trio
Fogou Jazz, Exeter Phoenix, Bradninch Place, Gandy Street, Exeter
12 Bob Reynolds
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
12 Luzmira Zerpa
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
12 Dugong
Jazz at the Lescar, The Lescar Hotel, Sharrowvale Road, Sheffield
12 John East
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

THURSDAY

13 Art Themen
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds
13 Laurence Cottle Quartet
Swansea Jazz Club, The Garage Music Venue, 47 Uplands Crescent, Swansea
13 Bob Reynolds
Band on the Wall, 25 Swan Street, Manchester
13 Colectiva
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
13 Hugh Pascall Quintet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
13 Hannah Horton Quartet
Hampstead Jazz Club, The Duke of Hamilton, 23-25 New End, Hampstead, London NW3
13 Alex Cosmo Blake
Jazz Re:Freshed, 91 Living Room, Brick Lane, London E1
13 Steve Waterman Quintet
Guildford Jazz, Pavilion, Woodbridge Road, Guildford
13 Robert Mitchell's True Think
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
13 Antonio Forcione
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

FRIDAY

14 Pete Tanton Quartet
Bishop Auckland Town Hall, Market Place, Bishop Auckland
14 Takuya Kuroda
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1

Hermeto Pascoal: Jazz Cafe, London, 31 October

14 Eliane Correa
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
14 DKT
Birmingham Jazz, 1000 Trades, 16 Frederick Street, Birmingham
14 Dugong
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
14 Art Themen
Wakefield Jazz, Sports Club, 8 Eastmoor Road, Wakefield
14 Chip Wickham
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
14 Simon Spillett Quartet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
14 Irene Serra Trio
Hampstead Jazz Club, The Duke of Hamilton, 23-25 New End, Hampstead, London NW3
14 Vasilis Xenopoulos and Paul Edis
Gala Theatre & Cinema, Millenium Place, Durham
14 Francesca Confortini
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SATURDAY

15 Vasilis Xenopoulos and Paul Edis (lunchtime)
St Cuthbert's Centre, Church Hill, Crook
15 Chip Wickham
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
15 Chris Rand
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
15 Joy Ellis
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
15 Matt3rs
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
15 Chelsea Carmichael
Turner Sims, University of Southampton, Highfield Campus, Southampton
15 Vasilis Xenopoulos and Paul Edis (evening)
Traveller's Rest, West Auckland Road, Cockerton, Darlington
15 Tony Kofi
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SUNDAY

16 Vasilis Xenopoulos and Paul Edis
Cluny, Lime Street, Newcastle upon Tyne
16 Jamie Taylor and John Stowell
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds
16 Dana Gillespie
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
16 Tommy Blaize Trio
Pizza Express LIVE, 99 High Holborn, London WC1
16 Sarah Gillespie
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
16 City Steam Jazz Band
Plymouth Jazz Club, The Royal British Legion Club, Tailyour Road, Crownhill, Plymouth

MONDAY

17 Ronnie Scott's Jazz Orchestra
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
17-18 Kathy Kosins and Paul Edis
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
17 Sue Ferris and Steve Summers Quartet
Black Bull, Bridge Street, Blaydon
17 Dave Bristow
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

TUESDAY

18 Billy Pod Quartet
Fogou Jazz, Preston Conservative Club, 299 Torquay Road Paignton
18 Joe Locke
Watermill Jazz, Betchworth Park Golf Club, Dorking
18 Becca Stevens
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
18 Gary Wilcox
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11
18 Big Kettle Jazz
St Ives Jazz Club, Western Hotel, Royal Square, Gabriel Street, St Ives, Cornwall
18 Larry Goldings Solo Piano
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

WEDNESDAY

19 Assembly Trio
Jazz at the Lescar, The Lescar Hotel, Sharrowvale Road, Sheffield
19-20 Joe Locke Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
19 Valmuz
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
19 Kathy Kosins and Paul Edis
The Pheasantry, 152/154 Kings Road, London SW3
19 Alex Bone
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
19 Howard Alden
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

THURSDAY

20 Mondo Trumpet
Newcastle Arts Centre, Westgate Road, Newcastle
20 Tyne Valley Big Band
Star & Shadow Cinema, Warwick Street, Newcastle upon Tyne
20 Alex Bonney Quartet
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
20 Joshua Jaswon Octet
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
20 VS Funk Soul Orchestra
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
20 Andrew McCormack Trio
Cambridge Modern Jazz, The Gonville Hotel, Gonville Place, Cambridge
20 Andy Davies
Swansea Jazz Club, The Garage Music Venue, 47 Uplands Crescent, Swansea

Airshots
October 22 Radio

BBC RADIO 2 88-91 FM
Big Band Special (Mon, 11pm),
Jamie Cullum show (Tues, 9pm)

BBC RADIO 3 90-93 FM
J to Z (Sat 5pm)

Ron Carter Special (24 September)

Trish Clowes in session plus Omar Sosa's inspirations (1 October)

The best in jazz - past, present and future (8 October)

Chicago-born, Brooklyn-based vibraphonist Joel Ross shares some of the music that inspires him (15 October)

New Orleans master alto saxophonist Big Chief Donald Harrison on some of the tracks that have shaped his musical journey (22 October)

The best in jazz - past, present and future (29 October)

BBC RADIO 6 MUSIC DAB

Gilles Peterson, Sat 3pm

JAZZ FM DAB, Sky, Alexa, smartphone, tablet and online at jazzfm.com
(Mon – Fri) 6am-6.30am Business Breakfast, 6.30am-10am Jazz FM Breakfast with Nigel Williams, 10am-2pm Midmornings with Deb Grant, 2pm-6pm Afternoons with Jamie Crick, 6pm-7pm Jazz FM's Greatest with Mark Walker, 7pm-9pm Dinner Jazz with Mark Walker. (Mon) 9pm-10pm The Performance Series with Ruth Fisher, 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Tues) 9pm-10pm Jazz Travels with Sarah Ward, 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Weds) . 9pm-10pm The Big Easy with Lil' Koko. 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Thurs) 9pm-10pm True Brit with Helen Mayhew. 10pm-Midnight Late Night China Moses. (Fri) 9pm-10pm The Ronnie Scott's Radio Show with Ian Shaw. 10pm-1am Late Night Jazz with Helen Mayhew. (Sat) 6am-9am The Weekend Breakfast with Simon Phillips, 9am-10am Winter Book Club, 10am-2pm Nigel Williams Saturday Show, 2pm-6pm YolanDa Brown on Saturday, 6pm-9pm The Sarah Ward Collection, 9pm-10pm Jazz FM Voices, 10pm-1am The Blueprint with Chris Philips. (Sun) 6am-10am The Weekend Breakfast with Simon Phillips, 10am-1pm Tony Minvielle, 1-3pm Robbie Vincent, 3pm-5pm Sunday Afternoons with John Osborne, 5-7pm Blues and Boogie with David Freeman, 7pm-9pm Clare Teal Big Band Jazz; 9pm Sunday Discovery and 10pm-1am Somethin' Else with Jez Nelson.

ONLINE AND PODCASTS
www.soulandjazz.com – Mike Chadwick bi-weekly show; Tony Minvielle, first and third Wednesdays each month; Jazz On The Beach with Adam Sieff, every Wednesday from 10.00pm - 12.00 midnight on DealRadio.co.uk; the 606 Club Straight Ahead Show with Dave Lewis, every Wednesday at 10pm.
Richard Heath's Alt 2 Show
www.radio.lsu.co.uk (9-11pm Thurs);
www.mykindamusic24.com – the Jazz Cavern, Thur 9pm
Dave Self's Sounds of Jazz (4-5pm Tues)
www.tunein.com/radio/Blast-1386-s6837/
www.jazzlondonradio.com
www.cosmicjazz.co.uk with Derek Merrill
www.careradio.org - Alan Steadman's Jazz Waves Sun 11pm and repeated.

REGIONAL RADIO ENGLAND
World Beats , Kane 103.7 FM www.kanefm.com (Thurs, 11am); The Jazz Show, 99.2 Hermitage FM with Peter Varden (Weds, 6pm) on 99.2 FM in north west Leicestershire area and online at www.hermitagefm.com; Jazz Kaleidoscope with Alan Musson on 102.5FM in the Southern Black Country and online at www.thebridgeradio.net (Mon, 9pm); David Freeman jazz show on The Wireless (on DAB in London and Yorkshire, (Weds, 7pm); Slipstreem Worldwide Beats, RadioReverb 97.2 FM in Brighton and radioreverb.com (11am Sunday);

WALES Radio Cardiff 98.7 FM, Humie Webbe's Jazz Train (Sun, 10am) and Late Night Jazz (Thurs 10-11pm) on www.witney.radio.

SCOTLAND BBC Radio Scotland 92.4-94.7 FM The Jazz Nights with Seonaid Aitken (Sun, 7pm)

NORTHERN IRELAND BBC Radio Ulster 92-95 FM Walter Love (Sun, 7pm), Linley Hamilton (Fri, 10pm)

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND RTÉ John Kelly's Mystery Train, RTE Lyric FM (Sun-Thurs, 7-9pm); Brian Priestley's That's Jazz, Radio Kerry (Weds, 9-10pm and podcast); Eddie Lee's Kind Of Blue, Radio Sligo online (Weds, 8-9pm, repeated Sun 9-10pm)

Mark Guiliana: Jazz Cafe London, 23 October

20 Aaron Liddard
Hoochie Coochie, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne
20 Neil Angilley
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

FRIDAY
21 Kathy Kosins and Paul Edis
Hampstead Jazz Club, The Duke of Hamilton, 23-25 New End, Hampstead, London NW3
21 Pete Tanton Quartet
Lit & Phil, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne
21 Camilla George
Guildford Jazz, Boileroom, 13 Stoke Fields, Guildford
21-22 Theo Croker
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
Bringing music from his seventh studio album Love Quantum, innovative trumpeter and composer Theo Croker returns to Soho. One of the shows will be livestreamed – well worth tuning in if you can't get there in person.
21 Dominic Ingham Quintet
B:Music, Birmingham
21 Alan Barnes Quartet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
21 Mammal Hands
KOKO, 1a Camden High Street, London NW1
21-23 Leyburn Jazz Festival: Nicki Allan, Matt Anderson and more
Various venues, Leyburn
21 The Antidote
Birmingham Jazz, 1000 Trades, 16 Frederick Street, Birmingham
21 Josephine Davies Enso Ensemble
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
21 John Settle
Wakefield Jazz, Sports Club, 8 Eastmoor Road, Wakefield
21 George Anderson
Hoochie Coochie, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne

SATURDAY
22 Oli Howe Trio
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
22 Christoph Iringer Trio
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
22 Cut Capers
Cluny, Lime Street, Newcastle upon Tyne Sunday
23 Natalie Williams Soul Family
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
23 Mark Guiliana
Jazz Cafe, 5 Parkway, Camden, London NW1
23 Dave O'Higgins
Hoochie Coochie, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle upon Tyne
23 Noel McCalla (evening) Greg Davis (lunchtime)
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

MONDAY
24 Tom Smith Big Band
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
24 Yellowjackets
Jazz Cafe, 5 Parkway, Camden, London NW1
24 Peter Bernstein Quartet
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
24 Misha Mullov Abbado
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

TUESDAY
25 Ed Jones Quartet
East Side Jazz Club, 2 Harvey Road, London E11
25 Pete Oxley and Nic Meier
Watermill Jazz, Betchworth Park Golf Club, Dorking
25 Judith Hill
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
25 Iain Ballamy
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

WEDNESDAY
26 Matt Carmichael
Municpal Hall, Kirkstyle, Biggar
26-27 Ghost-Note
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
26 Anthropology Band
Cafe Oto, 18-22 Ashwin Street, London E8
26 Jo Harrop
Pizza Express Jazz Club, 10 Dean Street, London W1
26 Tony Kofi and NYJO
Band on the Wall, 25 Swan Street, Manchester
26 Awen Ensemble
Jazz at the Lescar, The Lescar Hotel, Sharrowvale Road, Sheffield

THURSDAY
27 Christine Tobin Trio
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds
27 Julian Costello
Guildford Jazz, Pavilion, Woodbridge Road, Guildford
27 R D E Trio
Jazz Re:Freshed, 91 Living Room, Brick Lane, London E1
27 Tristan
Swansea Jazz Club, The Garage Music Venue, 47 Uplands Crescent, Swansea
27 Rose Room
Beacon Arts Centre, Custom House Quay, Grenock
27 Pat Clahar
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

FRIDAY
28 Crooners
Tyne Theatre, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne
28 Christine Tobin
Vortex Jazz Club, 11 Gillett Square, London N16
28 Matt Riley Quintet
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
28 Brooklyn Funk Essentials
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
28 Brian Molley and Tom Gibbs
St Peter's Episcopal Church, High Street, Linlithgow
28 Hannah Horton Quartet
Wakefield Jazz, Sports Club, 8 Eastmoor Road, Wakefield
28 Samara
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SATURDAY
29 Ubunye
Cluny, Lime Street, Newcastle upon Tyne
29 Gianluca Petrella Cosmic Renaissance
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
29 Partikel
Bear Club, Mill Yard, 24A Guildford Street, Luton
29 Ari Hoenig Trio
Peggy's Skylight, 3 George Street, Nottingham
29 Clare Teal (evening) Brigitte Beraha (afternoon)
St George's Bristol, Great George Street (off Park Street), Bristol
29 Tristan
Hampstead Jazz Club, The Duke of Hamilton, 23-25 New End, Hampstead, London NW3
29 Jackson Mathod
Verdict Jazz Club, 159 Edward Street, Kemptown, Brighton
29 Alex Garnett
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

SUNDAY
30 Big Chris Barber Band
Whitley Bay Playhouse, Marine Avenue, Whitley Bay
30 W3 Funk Sessions
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
30 Kate Peters Quintet
Seven Arts, 31A Harrogate Road, Chapel Allerton, Leeds
30 Polly Gibbons
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10

MONDAY
31 Peter Bernstein with Jim Mullen
606 Club, 90 Lots Road, London SW10
31 Ari Hoenig Trio
Band on the Wall, 25 Swan Street, Manchester
31 Ronnie Scott's Club Quintet present Blues for Dracula
Ronnie Scott's, 47 Frith Street, London W1
31 Hermeto Pascoal
Jazz Cafe, 5 Parkway, Camden, London NW1

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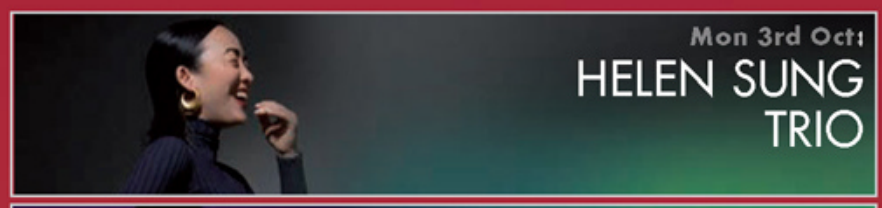

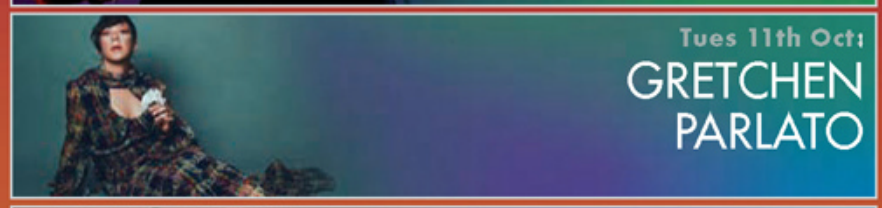

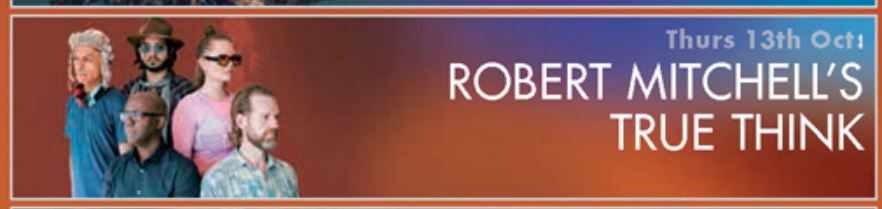

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Letters

Write in to us here at Letters Dept, Jazzwise Magazine, St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road, London SE24 0PB or email letters@jazzwise.com

Essex policies' deleterious effect on the county's jazz scene

As a born-and-bred Essex geezer, I was sad to hear the news that The Jazz Centre was being kicked out of its current home (The Beecroft Art Gallery) at the sudden behest of Southend Council to make way for more '*objets d'art*'.

The Jazz Centre always felt unique in being dedicated to preserving the rich jazz history of this country as well as offering gigging opportunities to both professional and young up and coming musicians. I really believe they had taken huge strides in furthering the appeal of the venue as a charity (despite the pandemic), which can be seen in the breath and quality of musicians wishing to play there.

I understand space at the gallery was at a premium, but I can't help feeling this decision was very short-sighted by the council and I worry for its future as they are now against the clock to find a new venue. I hope they find somewhere soon, but it just won't be the same as the art gallery as it was in such a convenient spot for people to drive too or get the train.

Similarly, I was shocked to see the current gig listing at the Colchester Art Centre. It appears that a good many of the jazz artists that were booked for the remainder of the year and beyond, have disappeared to make way for artists in other genres. I don't begrudge local rock and soul bands the opportunity to play there, but it still feels like a kick to the guts when it's at the expense of some superb jazz artists, that locals might not otherwise get to see without visiting Ronnie Scott's.

I was always pleased because I felt Essex punched above its weight for live music and jazz in particular, compared to other counties and our capital, but now it's starting to feel like the county is taking a huge step back. I've noticed quite a few live jazz and blues nights appear to have been cancelled since the pandemic, due to licencing and monetary issues. I truly hope this is only a temporary blip and we will start to see the local live scene flourish again, but I'm not holding my breath. **Adrian, via email**

Donny's dynamite

Oh Lizz Wright, your comments and thoughts (*Jazzwise* 277) on Donny Hathaway's breathtaking *Extension of a Man*... We're not vocalists, but also recognise the absolute class within this classic album, on par with Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On*. We've had it on continuous rotation since 1974 (and we're now on copy number two). A true Desert Island Disc. We were already playing Donny's earlier album *Everything is Everything*. This was Donny's first adventure on Atlantic/Atco. Then his masterpiece was produced in 1973 by Arif Mardin. The ironic thing is the CD version, which is available on Rhino, includes an additional track 'Lord Help Me'. This was very poignant, as Donny was struggling with mental illness, diagnosed as paranoid schizophenia. Sadly, while recording in January 1979 his illness took hold, he was found dead after jumping from the 15th floor of the Essex House Hotel, Manhattan. We remember placing the needle on the A side for the first time... Wow, a massive orchestrated opening: 'I Love the Lord, He Heard My Cry (Part 1)'. Again, unknown at that time, another poignant moment. This piece was composed and conducted by Hathaway. Fabulous. It flows straight into one of the greatest male vocal sessions of our time, truly exceptional. Like Lizz, we normally listen only with our own company... it's that emotional. I do recommend those who as yet haven't sat and listened to this album. Take an hour out of your live and enjoy.

Thanks again Lizz and *JW*....

Ashley & Elaine, Winchester

Donny Hathaway

The wonders of Wilmer

What great content there is in your magazine – especially the pieces by Val Wilmer, which are always wonderful for any music, jazz listener or lover who's curious about the how, why and who of the various jazz scenes. I hope these will continue and I look forward to reading more!

Ray Whitehouse, Milnrow, Rochdale, Lancs

Val Wilmer replies:

Thanks, Ray, for your kind comments. It is a pleasure to be able to write about exceptional indidividuals such as Gus Leslie, and enterprises such as The Sunset (Jazzwise, August), although I wish I'd had another two pages to talk about the musicians in more detail, especially to thank Al Timothy.

At the same time, I have always felt that working on such historiees comes with a responsibility to get the facts right. Because of this, a few words are due concerning what I call 'editorial enthusiasm'. This has left the impression that the Sunset was a jazz club when it was not. It was a nightclub where jazz was played. And while the Contents page of the August issue of Jazzwise suggests the club was still going in the 1960s, the article makes clear that it closed in 1958.

Val Wilmer, London N16

More on *On Jazz*...

In your August issue Andy Robson says he looks forward to hearing more opinions, regarding his review of Alyn Shipton's book *On Jazz*. I have read and enjoyed this particular volume, learning much about areas that Mr Robson barely mentioned in his review, in particular the life stories and experiences of such African American female musicians as Blue Lu Barker, Evelyn McGhee Stone, Carmen Bradford, Jewel Brown and Abbey Lincoln.

Robson says that the book could have been all the richer for exploring the power and responsibility implicit in the author's 'white privilege'. It seems to me that almost all the 260 or so pages of this book explore that very theme, and additionally in the many autobiographies by black musicians that Mr Shipton has helped into print with a range of publishers, from unsung New Orleans pioneers to the likes of Roy Porter and Buddy Collette, he has used that very position of 'privilege' to get black voices heard.

In the part of the preface Mr Robson doesn't mention, the author actually says that by working with these players, they have together been "telling of lives that really mattered in creating a marvellous art-form".

Kathleen Quinn, via email

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